

# MISSING

## Abducted



**Jacob Wetterling    Age 11**

Jacob was abducted on Sunday, October 22, 1989, from 91st Avenue South of St. Joseph, Minnesota at approximately 9:15 p.m. . He and his brother and a friend were approached by a male subject wearing dark clothing carrying a handgun. Jacob's brother and friend were allowed to leave but Jacob was forced to remain. No vehicle was seen. Jacob is five feet tall, 75 pounds, brown hair, blue eyes, mole on left cheek, wearing a red hockey jacket with an orange vest, blue sweat pants, and Nike high top tennis shoes.

If you have any information, please call the Stearns County Sheriff's Department at 612-251-4240 or Crime Stoppers at 612-255-1301 or toll free 1-800 255-1301 .

9850

M/2

PRESS RELEASE

The Jacob Wetterling Task Force would like the help from the area farming community. We would like rural property owners within 75 miles of St. Cloud, Minnesota, to check road ditches and paths along their property to check for the below clothing items Jacob was last seen wearing:

A red jacket with an emblem of a police badge on the back. This is a hockey team jacket. Name "JACOB" is stitched on front.

Orange sleeveless vest, with silver trim and black drawstrings on each side.

Blue sweatpants

Nike high top tennis shoes, size 5, white with gray Nike symbol on side.

Blue mesh jersey

Red t-shirt with CMYSA and the number 11 on it, name "WETTERLING" across back.

White tube socks

White boy's briefs.

If you have any information, please call the Stearns County Sheriff's Department at (512) ~~251-4246~~ or toll free 1-800-255-1301.

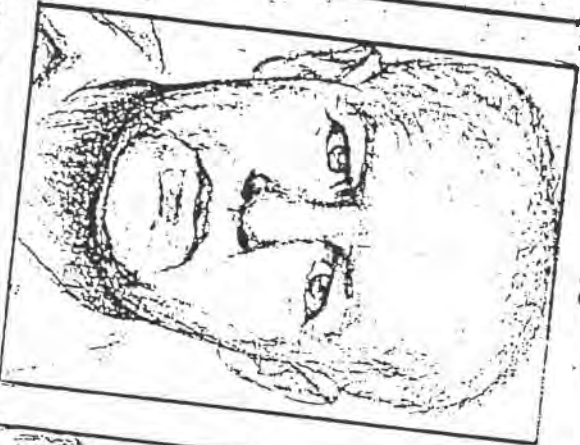
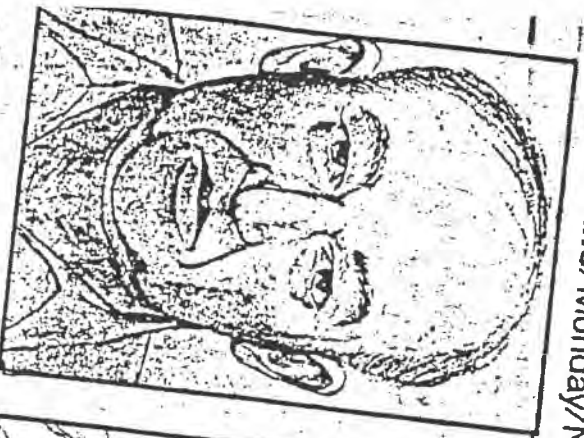
259-3981

Thank you  
Charlie Grafft  
Stearns County Sheriff

9849

23

Star Tribune/Monday/November 13/1989



9A

Left, a composite of a man seen in the store where Jacob had gone just before the abduction. Center, a man seen in the same store Nov. 5. Right, the man who tried to abduct a boy in New Brighton last week.

# Jacob

Continued from page 1A

Similarities of the men involved, of whom appeared to be in their 40s, 50s, and the fact that both incidents involve boys of about the same

New Brighton boy told authorities that a balding, gray-haired man had picked him up in his car Wednesday afternoon, saying, "Your parents told me to pick you up." The boy, aware of the Wetterli kidnapping, raced home on his bicycle.

The boy's mother said it was about 5:30 p.m. Their son retrieved his bicycle at his cousin's home and was heading home alone when the man in the gray car approached, opened his car door, and ordered the boy in the car, the parents said.

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# SPIRITU TAKES



2370



M/4

This is an artist's conception of an individual who attempted to abduct a 10 year old boy in Stearns County. There are similarities between the abduction of JACOB WETTERLING and this attempted abduction.

At this time we do not know if the person depicted in the artist's conception is the individual who abducted JACOB.

The individual depicted in the artist's conception is a white male, late 20's, dark brown hair, dark eyes, slim build, fair complexion, driving an older model light brown van with white trim and rust along the bottom.

We are requesting the public's help in identifying the individual depicted in this artist's conception.

Anyone who can provide information regarding this person's identity is requested to call the Stearns County Sheriff's Office at 612-259-3981.

4671





This is a sketch of a suspect linked to the Jan. 13, 1989, abduction and sexual assault of a 12-year-old boy in Cold Spring. The FBI says he is a suspect in the abduction of Jacob Wetterling near St. Joseph.

## From Page 1A Jacob

■ No prime suspect has emerged, although thousands of people have been questioned.

Two Minnesota men "confessed" to killing Jacob, but were found to be lying, Graff said.

"I don't know if they wanted attention or what their motives were. We put large teams of investigators on them right away, but they were ruled out."

One of the men was placed in a mental institution, Graff said.

Investigators today are focusing their efforts on a handful of men who may be promising suspects.

Authorities have their names and know where they are, but will provide few details.

At least one has been a potential suspect for about a month, said Jim Kostreba, assistant Stearns County sheriff.

One looks somewhat like a sketch of an older man who was seen acting suspiciously at a St. Joseph Tom Thumb convenience store Jacob visited the night he was kidnapped, Kostreba said.

Authorities cautioned, however, that none of the men is considered a prime suspect.

The most recent strong lead came when investigators found a sure link between the kidnapping and sexual assault of a 12-year-old Cold Spring boy and Jacob's abduction. A detailed sketch of the man in that case is being mailed around the country by volunteers at the Friends of Jacob office in St. Joseph.

### Some benefits

Although the Jacob Wetterling Task Force so far has failed to find the abducted boy, their work hasn't been completely fruitless, Graff said.

He points to the task force's massive status report on sex offenders in Minnesota, which has been used by other law enforcement agencies in the state. It contains up-to-date information on about 5,000 men in Minnesota — both in and out of prison — who have committed sex crimes.

The report is probably the most comprehensive and up-to-date resource on sex offenders in the state and will be invaluable in future investigations, said Al Garber, supervising FBI agent on the task force.

A copy may be turned over to the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, he said.

About 10 arrests have resulted from information passed to other law en-

Awareness of child abductions has increased dramatically, Graff said.

"The whole public and especially parents are more aware that people like this are out there," Graff said. He planned to increase safety education in the schools as a result.

### Tips are fewer

Calls to the Jacob Wetterling Task Force are decreasing, Graff said.

At one time, there were 30 telephone task force headquarters in the basement of the Law Enforcement Center in St. Cloud. Now only about half that are needed, Graff said.

"I don't think people are losing interest. I think they just don't have anything to offer."

Investigators now staff the phones from about 7:30 a.m. to late evening. Overnight, police dispatchers pick up the calls.

With fewer leads to follow up, some Minneapolis FBI agents have been reassigned. Fewer volunteers are needed.

"The sad part of this is that life goes on," Graff said. "We've got to attend to other things."

At the height of the investigation, about 60 investigators worked full-time on the case. Now, there are between 10 and 20 each day.

Task force leaders say, as long as tips keep coming in, some investigators will remain on the case. Garber said he evaluates each day to decide how many investigators are needed for the amount of work there is.

### What now?

Families sometimes hire private investigators as police are pulled off a case.

But the effort is useless in stranger abductions, said David Collins, head of the Kevin Collins Foundation.

Without a name or Social Security number to track down, private investigators can add little to a police investigation, Collins said.

Collins has worked on several cases through his foundation, named after his son, who was abducted in California almost six years ago at age 10. Kevin has not been found.

There still are two rewards being offered in connection with the case.

Crimestoppers is offering \$50,000 for the safe return of Jacob, said Ken Twit, a St. Joseph community organizer. Another \$10,000 is offered to anyone who can identify the abductor.

But rewards, even large ones, have limited value, said Julia Cartwright, media relations director with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Cartwright said rewards rarely lead investigators to a missing child or ab-

# 81 days of searching.

■ Oct. 22. Eleven-year-old Jacob Ervin Wetterling is abducted by a masked gunman around 5:15 p.m. along 91st Avenue, southeast of St. Joseph. A short time later, St. Joseph firefighters and about 35 officers from the Stearns County Sheriff's Department, Tri-County Major Crime Investigation Unit and State Patrol search the area. Two local FBI agents and five from Minneapolis are assigned to the case. A state helicopter equipped with search lights is flown in to probe the nearby woods and fields.

Authorities establish a command post at the Del-Win Ballroom in St. Joseph. At around 3 a.m., the air- and ground searches are called off until daylight.

■ Oct. 23. The search resumes around 6 a.m. with officers from the Department of Natural Resources using all-terrain vehicles to comb the woods and fields within a 2-mile radius of the abduction, and helicopters fly over a 25-square-mile area. A bloodhound from Minneapolis is brought in and leads officers to the tracks, confirming their hunch that the abductor had a car nearby.

Tri-County Crimestoppers gets about a dozen tips by telephone, and the switchboard at the sheriff's department is flooded throughout the day with calls from people offering help. By 1:30 p.m., "Missing" fliers are printed and distributed. Photos are sent to all law enforcement agencies within the five-state area, and the search headquarters moves to the basement of the Law Enforcement Center in downtown St. Cloud.

■ Oct. 24. About 75 College of St. Benedict students begin a prayer march from the college to Del-Win Ballroom, 1½ miles away. Two hours later, about 250 people hold a second march while St. Ben's and St. John's University students help distribute fliers to surrounding towns.

Investigators check on recently released St. Cloud reformatory inmates who had been convicted of sex crimes. A man staying in an Avon motel is questioned.

■ Oct. 24. An FBI expert in psychological profiles files in from Washington, D.C., to join about 14 other investigators.

■ Oct. 25. Authorities receive several tips that a small red car had been seen in St. Joseph during the past three weeks. Dispatchers describe the driver as a white, with sandy hair, in his mid 20s to about 30, and weighing from 185 to 190 pounds. About two dozen red cars in the area are investigated.

An FBI psychological profile describes the abductor as a white male, age 25 to 35, employed in a low-skilled job with a low self-image probably stemming from a physical deformity such as acne or scars.

About 600 people gather in St. Joseph Church to pray and offer strength to the Wetterling family.

■ Oct. 26. At 11:30 a.m., about 30 horses from at least five southern Minnesota counties form a volunteer posse and begin searching one mile east of St. Joseph.

About 50 officers, including 20 FBI agents, continue sifting through hundreds of tips.

A group of anonymous Twin Cities business leaders offer a \$100,000 reward for Jacob's safe return within 72 hours.

Jacob's story appears on "A Current Affair," a nationally syndicated television program.

While ribbons with the message, "Jacob's Hope" printed on them are distributed by community volunteers.

■ Oct. 27. Authorities dismiss the theory that the gunman escaped in a red car. An art student said he was in the area, looking for possible sketch scenes, and

may have been thought suspicious by residents.

Jerry and Patty Wetterling appear on "CBS This Morning."

At 7 a.m., radio stations across the state broadcast Jacob's favorite song — "Listen" by Red Grammer.

Gov. Rudy Perpich offers the help of National Guard troops.

Officials release an artist's sketch of a man who attempted to abduct a 10-year-old Stearns County boy during the summer. FBI agents say the physical and psychological profile of this man matches that of Jacob's abductor.

■ Oct. 28. One hundred National Guard members, 60 Department of National Resources volunteers, 60 sheriff's deputies on horseback and several members of Minnesota Search and Rescue Dog Association scout several square miles around the abduction site while three helicopters conduct an air search. A white sweat sock is uncovered within 100 yards of the site, but a Minnesota bloodhound was unable to track the scent further than a nearby road.

Tri-County Crimestoppers offers a reward of \$25,000, bringing the total reward to \$125,000.

■ Oct. 29. St. Peter's and Paul's Middle School holds a rally in the Municipal Sports Center parking lot.

■ Oct. 29. Another 100 National Guard members join the search.

Hundreds of white "Jacob's Hope" balloons are released after Sunday services at St. Joseph Catholic Church.

Between 7:30 and 10 p.m., road blocks are set up in St. Joseph and nearly 2,000 motorists are stopped and questioned by state troopers.

■ Oct. 30. The \$100,000 reward established by Twin Cities business leaders expires. The total reward is lowered to \$25,000.

■ Oct. 30. A white car carrying a young man and a boy fitting the description of Jacob is seen by a motorist near Hector. A man driving a white car is arrested in Eden Prairie, but is ruled out as the man seen by the motorist.

■ Oct. 31. The search for an off-white, late-model GM car with flat hubcaps continues. The witness of the Hector sighting later is less certain about the details.

Red Grammer visits the Wetterling home.

■ Nov. 1. Patty and Jerry Wetterling appear on ABC's "Good Morning America" television program.

St. Cloud State University students begin selling yellow armbands to generate money for the search fund.

A nationwide mass mailing of fliers is announced. Volunteers are sought — and found.

A benefit dance and auction at Del-Win Ballroom raises more than \$20,000.

■ Nov. 3. The Richmond Lions Club offers a \$100,000 reward for Jacob's safe return.

A total of 100 suspects have been questioned and eliminated.

A final ground search is conducted.

A benefit auction and dance is held at Skok Rapids American Legion and takes in about \$10,000.

An original song, written by Doug Wood of Sartell, titled "Jacob's Hope," is recorded by seven local musicians and two Twin Cities studio musicians.

■ Nov. 4. Nearly 5,000 people link hands, forming a chain from St. Joseph to St. Cloud in what is dubbed "Hands-for-Jacob."

A sketch of a late 1970s model Ford van is released. This van was believed to have been used in an earlier abduction attempt of a 10-year-old boy.

■ Nov. 5. A massive white ribbon, made by Girl Scout leaders, is hoisted on the Rockville water tower. Before a Vikings game at the Metrodome, a tribute is paid to Jacob.

The van sketch generates a heavy stream of tips.

## Where to call with tips

Anyone with information about Jacob Wetterling's abduction is urged to call the Stearns County Sheriff's Department at 259-0381 or Tri-County Crimestoppers at 1-800-255-1030.

Callers to Tri-County Crimestoppers may remain anonymous and collect a reward of up to \$50,000 for information leading to the safe return of Jacob Wetterling.

A reward of \$10,000 is offered for identification of a suspect in the 1989 abduction of a Cold Spring boy. See sketch at left.

■ Nov. 6. A composite drawing of a suspect is released. This man was seen suspiciously at a Tom Thumb store in St. Joseph and a Club Mart in Avon before the abduction. The suspect is about 35, about 5'6", about 160 lbs., with dark hair, a high forehead, a mustache and a piercing stare.

A possible sighting in Minn. Jacob and his abductor is reported by authorities downplay and later disprove.

■ Nov. 6. A possible link between the abduction and a similar situation in one is established and then broken. Cases were thought to be related to similarities between a sketch of a suspect and the first composite released in Jacob's case.

Before tip-off of the Timberline opening basketball game, a crowd of 35,000 gave the Wetterlings an ovation.

■ Nov. 9. Virgil L. Lick, a Cushing and writer, records a recording of Jacob Wetterling.

An unauthorized sketch of a suspect begins circulating. Total of tips received so far: more than 12,000.

■ Nov. 11. The unauthorized sketch is removed from circulation.

■ Nov. 12. Two more suspect sketches are released. One of who took part in the abduction of the 12-year-old boy in Cold Spring, Nov. 5, other of a man suspected of trying to kidnap a New Brighton boy.

■ Nov. 14. The two new suspect sketches are more than 300 tips. A 51-year-old man who escaped from Security Hospital 11 years ago covered to be close in age and once to one of the sketches.

Apolo High School students demand Jacob.

■ Nov. 15. FBI reports that the suspect is "one of hundreds" of people sought for questioning and is not suspect.

Jacob's story is featured on "60 Minutes" from St. Paul. A phone number to call with tips — a cash for the family.

More than 100 children from Kampus and Kidzie Kare day-care centers raise \$1,500 for the "Friends of Jacob" benefit.

The Richmond Lions Club is offering a \$100,000 reward for Jacob's safe return.

■ Nov. 16. KSSS-FM in St. Cloud, WOL-FM in Minneapolis begin a radio telethon to raise money for children.

■ Nov. 17. The radio telethon is more than \$70,000 to be distributed between the Jacob Wetterling Fund, the Collins Foundation in California and the Children's Hospital.

A detailed description of a car in the attempted abduction of a 13-year-old boy in Roberts, Wis., is released. This incident is believed to be related to Jacob's case.

# Chronology of the abduction: 81 days of searching, waiting



Linked to the Jan. 13, 1989, abduction of Jacob Wetterling.

Oct. 22. Eleven-year-old Jacob Wetterling is abducted by a masked gunman around 9:15 p.m. along 91st Avenue, southeast of St. Joseph. A short time later, St. Joseph firefighters and about 35 officers from the Stearns County Sheriff's Department, Tri-County Major Crime Investigation Unit and State Patrol search the area. Two local FBI agents and five from Minneapolis are assigned to the case. A state helicopter equipped with a search light is flown in to probe the nearby woods and fields. Authorities establish a command post at the Del-Win Ballroom in St. Joseph. At around 3 a.m., the air and ground searches are called off until daylight.

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At 4 p.m., about 75 College of St. Benedict students begin a prayer march from the college to Del-Win Ballroom, 1 1/2 miles away. Two hours later, about 250 people hold a second march while St. Ben's and St. John's University students help distribute fliers to surrounding towns.

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A possible sighting in Moor, N.D., of Jacob and his abductor is reported, but authorities downplay and later dismiss the report.

Nov. 8. A possible link between Jacob's abduction and a similar situation in Louisiana is established and then broken. The cases were thought to be related because of similarities between a sketch of the Louisiana suspect and the first composite released in Jacob's case.

Before tipoff of the Timberwolves home-opening basketball game, a crowd of more than 35,000 gave the Wetterlings a standing ovation.

Nov. 9. Virgil Utke, a Cushing country and western singer, records his "Ballad of Jacob Wetterling."

An unauthorized sketch of a former suspect begins circulating.

Total of tips received so far more than 12,000.

Nov. 11. The unauthorized sketch is removed from circulation.

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Nov. 14. The two new sketches generate more than 300 tips. A 51-year-old mental patient who escaped from St. Peter Security Hospital 11 years ago, is discovered to be close in age and appearance to one of the sketches.

Apolo High School students dedicate a tree to Jacob.

Nov. 15. FBI reports that the mental patient is "one of hundreds" of people being sought for questioning and is not a prime suspect.

Jacob's story is featured on "Gerald." Inmates from Stillwater donate 350 T-shirts — bearing Jacob's picture and phone numbers to call with tips — and \$500 cash for the family.

More than 100 children from Kiddie Kampus and Kiddie Kare day-care centers raise \$1,500 for the "Friends for Jacob" office by participating in the "Jumping for Jacob" benefit.

The Richmond Lions Club reward of \$100,000 expires at midnight.

Nov. 16. KXSS-FM in St. Cloud and WLOL-FM in Minneapolis begin a 27 1/2 hour radio telethon to raise money for missing children.

Nov. 17. The radio telethon brings in more than \$70,000 to be distributed between the Jacob Wetterling Fund, the Kevin Collins Foundation in California and Missing Children Minnesota.

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**Jacob's abduction**

A call placed to a missing children's network reported that Jacob was still in St. Joseph. FBI agents quickly investigated, but turned up nothing.

Nov. 18. More than 300 people attend a candlelight vigil held at Lake George.

Nov. 20. Six Bureau of Criminal Apprehension agents and five FBI agents are taken off the case.

A 10-year-old girl reports that she saw a boy that looked like Jacob in a car driving near Red Wing. Authorities are investigating.

Nov. 21. The escaped mental patient is ruled out as a possible suspect because authorities discovered that the man told himself five years ago.

Nov. 22. Car said near Red Wing is found to have been two buyers and is not linked to Jacob.

Nov. 23. FBI agents work to blend three suspect sketches into one because investigators believe the composite may be the same man.

Nov. 24. Authorities seek information on three cars seen in Jacob's neighborhood before the abduction. Sketches of drivers of two of the cars are released.

Nov. 25. Olympic Lanes in Foley holds a fund-raising event featuring several professional athletes.

Nov. 30. Authorities release a revised, more accurate sketch of the man seen in the Tom Thumb store in St. Joseph before the abduction.

A report that Jacob had been killed and his body disposed of at a closed meat-packing plant was proven false.

Dec. 2. The FBI rules out any connection between an attempted abduction of a 10-year-old Spring Lake Park boy and Jacob's abduction.

Dec. 3. FBI agents travel to Roberts, Wis., to re-interview a 13-year-old boy who escaped an attempted abduction.

The Wetterling family receives a typewritten letter from Pope John Paul II.

Dec. 6. First American National Bank dedicates a Christmas tree to the Wetterling family.

Dec. 14. Authorities search for a man who abducted and sexually assaulted a Cold Spring boy in January, 1989. Details of the two incidents lead them to believe they may be linked. A sketch of the suspect also is released.

Dec. 15. The search sparks about 400 new tips.

Dec. 17. About six officers have re-opened the case because of the new tips generated by the sketch.

Dec. 21. Authorities investigate a possible link between the abduction of an 11-year-old Redwood Falls boy and Jacob's case.

Dec. 22. A false rumor that Jacob is safe in Texas spreads quickly throughout the state. The FBI checks on the rumor and finds nothing. The rumor may have been started by news reports that a Ferguson Falls man injured in Panama, Jason Vernard, was safe in a Texas hospital. People apparently heard "Jacob" instead of "Jason."

Dec. 23. A group of Vietnam War veterans, led by Mark Clark of Coon Rapids, begins a 65-mile walk from Anoka to the Wetterling home to protest donations and other gifts.

Dec. 28. Tri-County Crimestoppers offers a \$10,000 reward for identification of the man depicted in the sketch released Dec. 14.

Dec. 29. The new reward offering prompts about 100 new tips.

Four FBI agents are pulled from the case and reassigned.

Jan. 9. FBI narrows focus to certain people. "We're not saying we have prime suspects," says Al Garber, supervising agent. "We don't feel we're very close to a solution."

— Compiled by David Roers

**Awareness of child abductions has increased dramatically, Grafft said.**

"The whole public and especially parents are more aware that people like this are out there," Grafft said he planned to increase safety education in the schools as a result.

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DEC -21-89

Thursday, December 21, 1989

## Stearn's County Sheriff releases sketch of abductor

The burglary of a residence north of Cloverdale was reported Dec. 11. About \$25 in change was taken. Entry to the residence was made by breaking the picture window.

The burglary of a residence east of Beroun was reported Dec. 12. Taken were a radio, a VCR, 45 VCR tapes, and jewelry. The burglary had taken place sometime during the day, and was reported at 3:53 p.m.

The burglary of a residence west of Askov was reported Dec. 12 at 5:13 p.m.

**Stearns County Sheriff's  
Department  
St. Cloud  
Dec. 14**

On Jan. 14 at approximately 9:45 p.m., a 12-year-old boy was abducted by a man who said he had a gun. The boy was walking home from ice skating in Cold Spring. The vehicle used in this abduction is described as a new or near new, four door, dark blue car, similar to a Chevrolet Celebrity. This boy was sexually assaulted, and then he was pushed from the car and into a ditch, in rural Stearns County.

The sheriff's department is concerned for the safety of the 12-year-old boy and his family. The department must also respect their requested right to privacy. For these reasons no other details of the Jan. 13 abduction can be discussed. The

similarities between the two incidents lead the investigators to believe that the Jan. 13 abduction and the Oct. 22 abduction of Jacob Wetterling are connected.

He is described as a white male, approximately 5'8", with husky shoulders, 40-50 years of age, and has a low-pitched raspy voice.

If anyone has any information concerning the identity of this person, please call the Stearns County sheriff's office at (612) 259-3981 or Toll Free Crime Stoppers 1-800-255-1301.





DEC -22-89

## Wetterling investigators look into Redwood Falls connection

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Investigators in the Jacob Wetterling kidnapping case are looking into the attempted abduction of an 11-year-old boy in the southwestern Minnesota community of Redwood Falls, FBI spokesman Byron Gigler said Thursday.

"We haven't been able to make any connection at this point" between the two cases, Gigler said. An 11-year-old Redwood Falls boy reported that he fled when a man in a two-door, medium-size red car told him to get into his vehicle as the youth rode his bicycle home Tuesday afternoon from an eye doctor's appointment, Gigler said.

The driver's window had what appeared to be masking tape along the top three inches of the

window, he said. The man was wearing a heavy jacket and a ski mask.

"The boy just got a quick look at who was speaking to him and rode off," Gigler said.

The boy described the man as having a low, raspy voice, like a smoker or someone with a cold. That matches the general description of the voice of the suspect in the Oct. 22 kidnapping of Wetterling, 11, near his St. Joseph home in central Minnesota and in the January abduction of a boy in nearby Cold Spring.

FBI agents have interviewed the Redwood Falls boy, school officials and local law enforcement officers, and Gigler said they believe the boy's story is true.

The only other recent reported abduction attempt involving a person wearing a ski mask came from Roberts, Wis., on Nov. 17, he said.

The man who kidnapped Wetterling as he, his brother and a friend rode their bikes home from a convenience store was wearing what appeared to be nylon hose over his face.

The vehicles involved in all of the cases have been different, he said.

GSS 250

## Grand jury calls kidnapping informant a 'pathetic witness'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

DES MOINES

An informant who has provided information on the 1982 abduction of an Iowa newspaper carrier claims to have multiple personalities and has been called a "pathetic witness" by a Nebraska grand jury, a newspaper reported.

But the parents of missing newsboy Johnny Gosch say the informant's claims are credible and that he has information about details of the case that were never made public.

Gosch was delivering the Des Moines Sunday Register when he disappeared near his West Des

Moines home on Sept. 5, 1982. He was 12 at the time.

Local, state and federal investigators have been unable to find him or a Des Moines newspaper carrier, Eugene Martin, who was 13 when he disappeared while delivering the Sunday Register in 1984. Last week, Gosch's mother, Noreen, said information gathered by private investigator Roy Stephens of Omaha, Neb., indicates a child-sex ring of four men carried out the abduction of her son.

Gosch said Stephens told her the same men may also be involved in other abductions, including Martin's and the October 1989 kidnapping of Jacob Wetterling in St. Joseph, Minn.

The Register reported Sunday that the informant who came forward with the information is Paul Bonacci, 23, an inmate in the Nebraska State Penitentiary, serving a sentence for three separate convictions of sexually abusing a minor.

In a recent investigation into the collapse of the Franklin Community Federal Credit Union at Omaha, Bonacci testified of drug use, sex and violence to investigators and a grand jury, the newspaper reported.

But the grand jury rejected the stories and said Bonacci "was perhaps the most pathetic witness to appear," the report said. It said Bonacci claimed in the investigation he had at least 28 personalities and that the grand jury said "his psychiatrist doubts that he can tell the truth."



MOST DETAILED ACCOUNT:

## Paroled Killer Accused in Deaths Of 11 Women in Rochester Area

NEW YORK  
TIMES 1/6/90

By ROBERT HANLEY

Special to The New York Times

ROCHESTER, Jan. 5 — A convicted killer of two children was accused today of killing 11 women, most of them prostitutes, in a series of attacks that began here in March 1988, a year after his release from prison for the earlier slayings.

Jubilant police officials said at a news conference that the arrest of the man, Arthur J. Shawcross, 44 years old, had solved a series of slayings that has bedeviled law-enforcement authorities here and throughout Monroe County.

But they stressed that the bodies of 16 women had been found along the Genesee River and elsewhere in the county and that Mr. Shawcross had been accused in only 11 deaths. The police have maintained that there was more than one killer.

### Weekly Counseling Sessions

"I'm very confident we have all the evidence necessary to see that this case is successfully concluded," said the Rochester Police Chief, Gordon F. Urlacher. "He did give us a statement. After talking to him, we did find additional bodies."

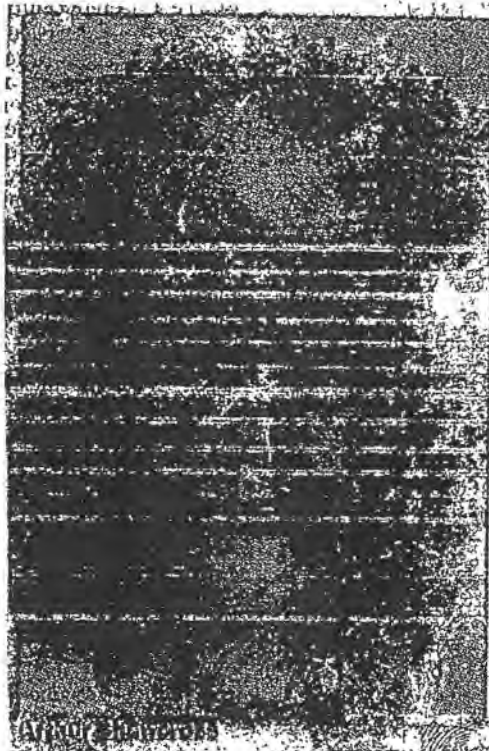
Mr. Shawcross confessed in 1972 to strangling an 8-year-old girl and a 10-year-old boy in his hometown, Watertown, N.Y., and served 15 years of a 25-year sentence for manslaughter, officials said. Several requests for parole were rejected before his release from the Green Haven state prison in Dutchess County in April 1987.

He arrived in Rochester a few months later, after having been driven out of Binghamton and Delhi, N.Y., be-

cause of his criminal record, officials said. He was attending weekly group counseling sessions at a mental health center and seeing his parole officer twice a month, said Edward Elwyn, executive director of the State Division of Parole.

Today the police said Mr. Shawcross had come to their attention through a

Continued on Page 28, Column 1



At least  
11 women in  
Rochester  
area slain  
since '88

PICTURE  
&  
CAPTION

NY DAILY  
NEWS

1/6/90

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JAMES McCULLAR

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# Parole Killer Is Accused In Slayings of 11 Women

NEW YORK TIMES 1/6/90

Continued From Page 1

lucky break.

The discovery of two more victims — one on Wednesday and another on Thursday — in Northampton Park west of Rochester triggered a chain of events that led to Mr. Shawcross's arrest.

## Followed to Nursing Home

About noon on Wednesday, officials said, three state troopers flying at tree level in a helicopter over Northampton Park spotted a body in a viaduct under a rural road, Route 31. Mr. Shawcross was in a car was parked by the viaduct.

Patrol cars alerted from the helicopter followed the car about five miles to a nursing home, where Mr. Shawcross's wife, Rosemary, worked, the authorities said. He was questioned immediately for the first time.

After a hunter found a second body Thursday morning hidden in some foundation ruins at the edge of the park, Mr. Shawcross was brought in for

a second round of questioning, which ended in his arrest.

And based on information from Mr. Shawcross, the police said, the bodies of two more prostitutes, one missing since Nov. 6 and the other since Dec. 23, were found Thursday night in woods along secluded country roads in the towns of Greece and Clarkson, some 15 miles west of Rochester.

Burly and balding, Mr. Shawcross was first convicted of crimes, for arson and burglary, in Watertown in 1963.

After his release from prison on April 30, 1987, Mr. Shawcross settled briefly in an emergency shelter in Binghamton. But less than two months later the newspaper there, the Press and Sun-Bulletin, published a front-page article revealing his presence there and his criminal past.

The newspaper was tipped off by someone "outraged that the guy is living here," said Susan Church, a staff reporter.

Mr. Shawcross went to Delhi, a village of 3,500 40 miles west of Binghamton. The police there were not happy.

## Angry, Frightened Residents

"I knew it could create a tremendous problem, and there was no way to keep it a secret," the Police Chief, Frank Harmer, said today, describing his reaction when a parole officer visited him and told him of Mr. Shawcross's plan to move to Delhi.

Residents were outraged and fearful, he said, and fearing violence from both Mr. Shawcross and residents. Chief Harmer decided that he and his department of five full-time and four part-time officers "would make sure he knew we were there."

Chief Harmer visited Mr. Shawcross twice, "advising him we would be watching him and advising him to keep a low profile." After four weeks, Mr. Shawcross moved on.

"I heard he moved on to a larger city," Chief Harmer said. "I didn't know it was Rochester."

Mr. Shawcross eventually settled with his wife in a first-floor apartment of an aging, three-story apartment building on Alexander Street across from Genesee Hospital, a few blocks from the heart of Rochester.

His life here apparently drew little notice. He worked nights preparing

A body found in Greece, N.Y., was carried away yesterday after a convicted killer directed the suspect is accused of 11 slayings.

## The suspect left two communities because of angry, fearful neighbors.

salads for G & G Food Services, a wholesaler that sells packaged foods to schools and hospitals.

Mr. Shawcross did not own a car and frequently rode his bicycle to and from work and around town. A favorite pastime was fishing. He was often seen early in the morning gathering worms from yards around his apartment house, the police said. His favorite fishing spot was along the Genesee River, which flows through Rochester.

The body of seven of the slain women were found along or near the river's deep gorge. Most of the victims

were prostitutes in an area near the river.

The authorities say they believe all of the victims were killed, either by strangulation or suffocation, after being enticed into a car.

Although Mr. Shawcross did not own a car, he frequently drove those of friends, the police said. The car he was spotted in Wednesday in Northampton Park was borrowed, the Rochester police said.

## No Motive Is Discussed

Mr. Shawcross was arraigned this morning on eight murder charges before Judge John M. Regan of Municipal Court. He pleaded not guilty and was held without bail.

The Monroe County District Attorney, Howard R. Rehn, said three more murder counts would be presented soon to state grand juries in Wayne and Monroe Counties. Those three murders, he said, are thought to have occurred outside city limits.

The authorities were motive in the crimes. "It's very difficult to head of someone like

But local police officials speculate that part course of the investigation slayings were part against prostitutes.

"They were just eating," one police official said.

Mr. Shawcross had been in the unsolved other women, most of the police said.

"They're considering cases that occurred time period," said

"The investigation of chetti, a Rochester inu-

James McCullar P. 84



N4 POST 1/6/90

ROCHESTER (AP) — A paroled child killer was charged yesterday in connection with 11 of the 17 serial murders of women here during the past two years.

Most of the alleged victims of Arthur Shawcross, 44, a balding and paunchy food service worker, were prostitutes, police said.

Shawcross, of Rochester, was arrested after state police using a helicopter to search for more victims saw him near one of the bodies in a suburban park and followed him to a nearby nursing home earlier this week.

"It is one of the most significant arrests not only in the history of Monroe County, but in the history of New York state and, possibly, the United States," said Monroe County District Attorney Howard Rellin.

"Most communities have found that serial killers are not arrested and not brought to justice."

The arrest drew a burst of anger from Robert Hill, a retired machinist whose 8-year-old daughter, Karen Ann, was strangled by Shawcross in 1972.

"I'd like him to be put away in the frying pan, double voltage, double amperage," Hill said from his home in Bristol, N.H. "And the parole board that let him out should be made to finish the sentence he was supposed to have had the first time."

Shawcross was on parole for a burglary conviction when Jack Black, 10, dis-



**BODY RECOVERED:** Police carry woman's body yesterday after being led to site by alleged serial killer.

Court and was ordered held without bail.

Rochester Police Chief Gordon Uriacher said Shawcross made statements about the murders and told police where to find three bodies, but he refused to say whether Shawcross had confessed to the crimes.

"The number that we believe that he's responsible for was 11," Uriacher said. A state police source said Shawcross confessed to 11 of the murders.

Police said the break in the case came Wednesday, when helicopter-borne officers spotted Shawcross' car and the body of June Cicero, 34, near a park in Ogden, about 12 miles west of Rochester.

The helicopter crew called for patrol cars, which followed Shawcross to the nursing home. Police refused to comment on any motive for the slayings.

"It's very difficult to get inside the head of a person like this," Uriacher said.



**ARTHUR SHAWCROSS**  
Charged in 11 deaths.

Associated Press

6/h  
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Saturday, January 6, 1990

DAILY NEWS

# Com held in 8 deaths

## He's eyed as upstate serial killer

By CAUSEWELL VAUGHAN  
Daily News Staff Writer

A man paroled in 1987 on a manslaughter rap was held yesterday as a Jekyll-and-Hyde serial killer who murdered up to 11 women — many of them mutilated before they were killed — in the Rochester, N.Y., area since his release.

### Successful conclusion

Arthur Shawcross, 44, who was convicted of strangling an 8-year-old Rochester girl

in 1972, pleaded innocent to the latest charges — the murder of eight women — and was held without bail.

Police feel that with Shawcross' arrest they have ended a reign of terror in which at least 14 women, most of them streetwalkers who were drug or alcohol abusers, have been killed since March 1988.

"For the most part, police in the area are very happy to bring this case to a successful conclusion," said Sgt. Roland Marchetti of the Rochester police.

State Police Superintendent Thomas Constantine said in Albany that charges will be brought against Shawcross in at least three more Rochester murders and that

he is a suspect in still more deaths.

"He went to them posing as a 'john' (customer), was able to get them in the car, then took control of them."

Constantine said. "In most cases, the death was strangulation."

After his arrest, Shawcross made statements about the slayings and told police

where to find three bodies, said Police Chief Gordon Uricher. The bodies of at least 14 slain women have been found in the area in the past 22 months.

According to police, Shawcross, a balding food service worker, was questioned Thursday after officers in a police helicopter saw his car speeding away from the culvert where a woman's body was found in a desolate area outside Rochester.

Shawcross was paroled from Green Haven state prison in June 1987 after serving 15 years of a 25-year sentence on his conviction of killing Karen Ann Hill, 8, of Rochester.

While on parole, Shawcross made "a conforming adjustment" to life on the outside, according to Edward Elwin, executive director of the state Division of Parole.

"There was nothing we saw to indicate there was some sign we missed," Elwin said.

Said Marchetti: "During that adjusted life he committed 11 homicides."

Published reports said Shawcross told police he killed the women for a variety of reasons. One was killed because Shawcross thought she lied about being a virgin, others for mocking his inability to engage in sex.

With News Wire Services



**ANOTHER BODY** is carried yesterday from site in the Rochester area, where 14 women killed since March 1988 are believed to be victims of serial killer. Police said they were led to the victim found yesterday in Greece, N.Y., by Arthur Shawcross, charged in eight of the slayings so far.

G/H  
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Jacob's pal Aaron Larson and younger brother Trevor were with him the night the gunman took him.



# Jacob Wetterling

"St. Joseph, Minnesota Pop. 3,178" reads the sign on the edge of town. The number is wrong. One boy is missing.



This photo of Jacob was being developed when he disappeared.

"I don't want to feel 'normal' about having five instead of six in the family," says Patty.



**O**n October 22, 1989, Jacob Wetterling, 11, was abducted at gunpoint by a masked stranger. He hasn't been seen since.

Jacob, his brother Trevor, 10, and their friend Aaron Larson were riding their bikes when the gunman stopped them on a dark winding dirt road only 800 yards from the Wetterling's driveway. At first the boys thought it was an older kid playing a prank. Aaron laughed. "Then the man start-

G/11/12/89



ed to talk," says Trevor, "and we knew it wasn't a joke."

The gunman made the three of them lie face down in a nearby ditch. "How old are you?" he asked Trevor. Apparently he was too young. "Run into the woods and don't look back or I'll shoot you," the man barked. Then he turned Aaron over, looked into his face and ordered him to do the same.

"We thought Jacob was running along with us," says Trevor, "but when we stopped and

looked back, we saw the man grab him by the arm." When they looked again, Jacob and his abductor had vanished.

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mom, looks younger than her 40 years. At first glance there's no sign of the stress and grief, though in unguarded moments her eyes resemble those of a mortally wounded animal. Her nails are bitten to the quick.

The night it all happened, the Wetterlings were at a friend's housewarming party. The kids called to ask permis-

sion to ride to the store. Patty replied ironically, "Sure, you want to ride your bikes two-and-a-half miles. In the dark."

She handed the phone to her husband. "Jerry, they want to talk to you."

Jerry Wetterling hadn't forgotten what it was like to be an "almost teenage" boy, and it wasn't quite dark. "You can go," he told them, "if you wear reflector vests and carry a flashlight."

"When we got the call at our friend's house after Jacob was taken," Patty remembers, "the first words out of my mouth were, 'Who said they could go to the store?' I don't know why I said that. It certainly wasn't Jerry's fault. He did and said everything he could have. We were worried about the kids getting hit by a passing car—not being kidnapped! But you want to blame someone."

In the 11 long months since then, she's found release for her anger only in the relentless search for Jacob. "We have to go forward, not backward," she says emphatically.

How do you go forward when your child is missing? For Patty, the answer is Jacob himself.

"One morning, after he'd been missing about four months, I walked into the kitchen," she recalls, "and thought, 'I can't go on. I can't do this anymore.' Then I heard Jacob's voice saying those very words and knew I had to keep going. If I want Jacob to be strong, I have to stay strong."

"I've had children tell me, 'My mom says you're crazy. She says Jacob's dead.' I answer, 'What if he's not?'"

No one in the Wetterling house ever says *if* Jacob comes home. It's always *when*. Law enforcement officials agree with the Wetterlings' positive attitude. "We've found nothing to indicate that Jacob is no longer alive," asserts Stearns County Sheriff Charlie Graft, who's been working feverishly on the case with only five days off since last October. "He's either not in the area, or he's locked up. I think he's a frightened little boy right now. I have no reason to believe he's not alive."

## LIFE

"The guys on the task force really help keep us focused," says Patty—despite the fact that at first these supportive lawmen directed their grueling questions toward Jerry.

Right after the kidnapping, Patty and Jerry appeared on local and national television. Something about Jerry's cool demeanor bothered viewers. Anonymous phone tips began fingering him as a suspect. "People were annoyed that Jerry didn't fall apart on TV," says Patty. "There were more than fifty calls saying, 'Take a closer look at that guy.'"

The calls resulted in endless interrogation of the Wetterlings. "I was asked if our sex life was normal, if Jerry had ever had a homosexual relationship, or if someone had

**Jacob's mom: "I say 'No!' and push away the horrifying images that could drive me to despair."**

wanted a relationship with him that he'd refused. Had he ever had an affair with another woman whose husband had found out? The questions made me consider things I'd never even thought of before. By the time they were finished I felt completely abnormal. But it was worse for Jerry."

From the beginning the authorities believed Jerry was innocent, but once accusations were made, they had no choice but to disprove them.

Jerry's tall and lanky, with a deep dimple in his chin, a warm smile and a solid handshake. His oversized glasses give him a studious appearance, making him seem reticent, even a little distant. But sit with him for five minutes and the anguish hidden beneath his button-down reserve steals across the room and into your gut like something alive.

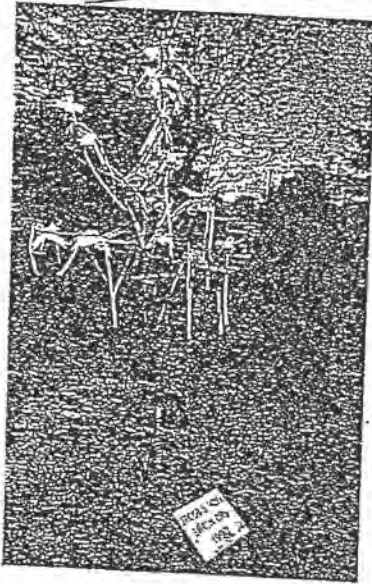
"Snatching a kid in the dark at gunpoint—it doesn't get

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# KIDNAPPED Jacob Wetterling

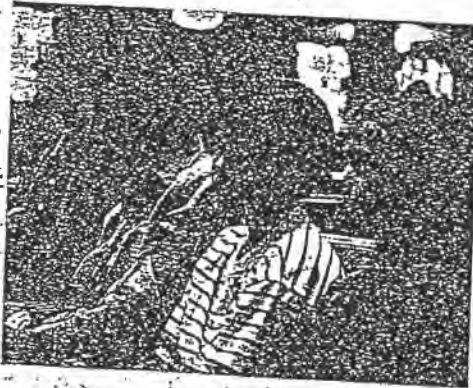


On Earth Day, St. Joseph decorated a tree of hope and life in Jacob's honor.

An outpouring of sorrow and love mingle during the town's prayer vigil for Jacob.



Volunteers help distribute posters and follow up on leads.



much worse than that. It touches the very fabric of the family unit. It says: Nothing's sacred anymore.

Jerry remains stunned by the drastic nature of the act. "We try not to let it make us afraid of the world or hateful toward people in general." His voice becomes flat as he swallows his feelings. "I've always felt, and since this happened I still feel, kids should be able to get on their bikes in a group and ride a mile down to the store. I may be naive, but they should be able to."

## Hope and fear

For 11 months Jerry and Patty have been overwhelmed by false alarms, have had their hopes raised, then dashed. Last Valentine's Day they feared the worst: The body of a 10- to 12-year-old boy was

found in St. Paul. "I thought it might be Jacob," Jerry confesses. "For the first time since this started, my mind kicked into that mode."

At 10 p.m., as they gathered around the TV with about 20 friends, the Wetterlings heard, along with the rest of Minnesota, that the body had been decapitated.

The next 30 minutes were the longest they'd ever lived through. At 10:30 they finally learned it wasn't Jacob.

"It's been an emotional roller coaster," admits Patty. "All those obvious and horrifying images could drive me to despair. I say, 'No!' and push them out of my mind."

"Every time the phone rings, you get your hopes up. Last week they thought they had him! A man who applied for a job in Illinois said he was

from St. Joseph and had an 11-year-old boy to support. The personnel worker was so sharp she called the police at once."

Maybe, just maybe, this time their son would be returned. The police investigated. When the call finally came it was another crushing disappointment. The man was cleared. They took up their 24-hour-a-day vigil once more.

When the phone rings, the automatic taping device turns on. Day after day calls come in—psychics with nebulous leads that have to be tracked down, reported sightings and cruel hoaxes.

"One night we got a collect call from Jacob," remembers Patty. "Can you imagine? I picked up the phone and a voice said, 'This is Jacob,' and then whoever it was hung up. When the tape was played back there was so much background noise we couldn't tell if it was Jacob's voice. The FBI experts examined it and decided the call was a prank."

## Jacob's siblings

There are three other children in the family, and Patty and Jerry are fierce in their resolve to let them get on with life as much as possible. "We have wonderful children who deserve dreams and happiness and good things," says Patty. "I'm not going to let whoever took Jacob rob them of that. I won't let it happen."

However, minor incidents can inflict fresh pain, making it difficult to go on with everyday family activities. "I couldn't bear to watch Trevor play hockey last year because it reminded me of Jacob. He was the team goalie. And we don't do all the things we used to—going bowling or other family sports."

**A**fter school one day the children gather in the living room, surrounded by walls and shelves crammed with reminders of their missing brother—an autographed football from the Vikings, a picture of the Berlin Wall spray-painted with the now internationally recognized slogan "Jacob's Hope"; a poster by children that says "Bad men

shouldn't steal kids."

Amy, 14, tall and pretty with her father's quiet manner; copes with the endless waiting by staying involved in school activities; Carmen, 8, too young when this happened to comprehend the full impact, looks for solace from her imaginary friends Abby, Abba and Worm. "Worm lives in one of Jacob's footprints," confides Carmen. "He can help find him."

Trevor works hard to conquer his fears. He plays basketball in the driveway by himself, and has even ridden his bike again on that fateful road, this time with Shannon, the 19-year-old baby sitter.

Outside, the sky suddenly

**Jacob's dad:  
"Snatching a kid  
at gunpoint—it  
doesn't get much  
worse than that."**

darkens and the wind rises sharply. Off in the distance, a low rumble announces the season's first thunderstorm. Patty sits up. "A medicine man told us that Jacob will be home when the thunder comes."

The dense poplar and white birch surrounding the house begin to dance in response. So tall and slender are the still-leafless trees, that as the storm gathers power, one fears they will snap like toothpicks in the gale. But like the family they shelter, the trees bend and sway beneath the fury of the wind, then rise again. When the sky clears and the sun emerges, Patty kneels against the back of the couch, and with all the excitement of a child looks out the window. "I wonder," she says, "if there will be a rainbow?"

Anyone wishing to help or report information may contact: Jacob Wetterling Foundation, P.O. Box 639, St. Joseph, MN 56374, or call Stearns County Sheriff's Department, 612-255-1301 or 1-800-255-1301.

by Elena Latic

Photo: Glen McLaughlin

# Memory of missing boy kept by vigil

Police track lead,  
family keeps hope

By Laura Baenen  
Associated Press writer

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. — A year after 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was seized by a masked gunman, volunteers touched by the disappearance of the kidnapped boy are planning a candlelight vigil and authorities are seeking to play down reports of a new suspect.

Stearns County Sheriff Charlie Grafft said the background of the newest suspect, a man seen in St. Joseph about three weeks ago, is being checked.

*The St. Cloud Times*, in a story published Saturday, quoted him as saying the suspect "looks pretty promising. This may be the man we're looking for." But he said Saturday that he wasn't sure he had made such optimistic comments and added, "it's just another lead."

FBI spokesman Byron Gigler in Minneapolis said the man is among a handful of suspects the FBI still is investigating. In all, he said, about 2,000 people have been interviewed about Jacob's disappearance.

Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, also had a cautious outlook Saturday, saying "I just have to look at it as just one more" lead. But about the sheriff's reported comments, she said, "His spirits were up, for sure. It caught me off guard, too."

Grafft would give few details of the suspect other than that he had a car with out-of-state plates and had been seen in this central Minnesota community of 2,200.

Jacob disappeared a year ago Monday, snatched by a masked man with a gun who stopped him, his brother, Trevor, and a friend as they rode bikes home that evening along a deserted stretch of road. The other boys say the man asked them their



AP PHOTO

Wetterlings at home; note pinned to teddy bear tells Jacob what to do if he shows up and no one is home.

ages, then told them to run into the woods or he would shoot.

As they fled, the boys looked back and saw the man grab Jacob's arm.

Thousands of fliers distributed nationwide, and searches by hundreds of volunteers, National Guardsmen and federal, state and local law enforcement officers failed to turn up a trace.

To mark the abduction's anniversary, the volunteers who organized the Jacob Wetterling Foundation planned simultaneous candlelight prayer services Sunday night here and in a Minneapolis suburb.

In an interview last week, Mrs. Wetterling said she and her husband, Jerry, became reluctant celebrities in the hopes the national publicity might help bring Jacob back.

"I think the thing that's hard for me right now is that Jacob has become symbolic of all missing children and we have become this goofy false celebrity," Mrs. Wetterling said.

"The bottom line is he is my son," she said, pounding her kitchen table with her fist as she blinked back tears. "And it hurts. He's not a symbol. He's Jacob. He's my son."

Since the abduction, children in St. Joseph stopped wanting to go out after dark.

"Not only had the abductor taken Jacob physically, but he stole something from us," said Gary Degeberg, chief financial officer of the Jacob Wetterling Foundation. "An innocence we once had no longer exists."

The passage of time has weighed heavily on Mrs. Wetterling, 40, her husband, 42, and their children.

Trevor, now 11, missed 43 days of school last year. He still spends nights in his parents' bedroom on a foldout bed, unable to sleep in the bedroom he once shared with his brother. Jacob's sisters, Amy, 14, and Carmen, 9, also struggle for some normalcy.

The family has endured what authorities say are unfounded rumors that Wetterling had his son abducted, a theory that Mrs. Wetterling blames on suspicion of her husband's Baha'i religion combined with people's need for a "reasonable explanation."

Passing the spot where Jacob was kidnapped has been a daily hurdle.

"We have to drive by that stupid spot anytime we want to go anywhere," Mrs. Wetterling said. "Our choices are to stay in here for the rest of our lives or to get over it. You get over it and you move on."

Jacob Wetterling Foundation has volunteers coordinating a nationwide distribution of posters bearing Jacob's picture and is offering a \$200,000 reward for his safe return. At least 3,000 people nationwide have contributed to the reward fund, Degeberg said.

Joseph Lewis, a high school counselor in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., is one volunteer who puts up posters, speaks to church and civic groups and wears a button with the picture and the words "Jacob Hope."

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## A year without Jacob

# Friend fueled media blitz, but work took toll

Fifth of eight parts  
By TOM LARSON

Times Staff Writer

This spring, on the end of a quiet cul-de-sac, Vern Iverson stood in his beautiful, immaculate Elk River home and thought he was going to die.

Crushing pain radiated through his chest, sweat flowed and he sucked hard for his breaths.

He was a 42-year-old man having a heart attack, he thought, and as the past six months flashed back in his mind, it wasn't surprising.

One Sunday night in October, he and his wife, Lea, were asleep when Judith Crawford, a friend in Duluth, called.

There was a problem concerning a friend and fellow Bahai faithful in St. Joseph, Jerry Wetterling. Jacob, the son of Wetterling and his wife, Patty, had been kidnapped.

Iverson was shocked. Vern, Lea, and their children, Amelia, 10, and Louis, 6, had seen the Wetterlings just two weeks earlier at the Green Lake Bahai Conference in Wisconsin. Singer Red Grammer had been at the conference, and Vern remembered that Jacob bought a tape that featured Grammer's song, "Listen."

About 1,200 to 1,500 Bahai faithful live in Minnesota, and they are tight-knit, Iverson said. In oversimplified terms, their credo is service to mankind.

Crawford's call came at 11:55 p.m. By 12:05 a.m., Iverson was on the phone with Jerry; he was very calm.

"I told him I was going to say prayers, and I began calling friends in the Twin Cities.

"Suddenly, I knew I had to go. I had this tremendous urge, this sensation, to get in the car and drive up there. I got in my little Honda Civic and I must have

# Jacob

driven 85 miles an hour the whole way up there. I could feel the car floating — you know how when the wind actually begins lifting the car. It was dangerous, but I just kept it going."

Just a month before Jacob's abduction, Iverson had seen a report on ABC's "20/20" news program about the owner of a construction firm who mobilized a massive search effort and media barrage after his 17-year-old daughter disappeared.

In the dark of his speeding car, "that story came blasting through."

He pulled into the Wetterlings' driveway at 1:37 a.m. and noticed one sheriff's car parked there. Jerry came outside to meet him, and Iverson quickly asked where the television stations' satellite trucks were. Jerry seemed puzzled.

Patty, the family and neighbors were at the house. Iverson sat with the group for about an hour before he mentioned the "20/20" program.

"We've got to get this into all the newspapers, radio stations and TV stations in the state. People have got to know what's going on so if the kid is seen at a truckstop, a phone booth, a rest stop, they'll know this kid."

Patty wasn't sure that was the thing to do, but Iverson pressed on. They talked to Stearns County Sheriff Charlie Grafft about instigating a media assault. Grafft said he'd talk to the FBI about the plan.

Friend/14A

"By 5 a.m., the FBI said, 'Let's do it,'" Iverson said.

Jerry gave Iverson the keys to his chiropractic office in downtown St. Joseph. They wanted the home phone left open in case Jacob made a break and tried to call home.

"I picked up the phone in Jerry's office and started calling. I called the television stations, newspapers, the TV networks, anybody I could think of. I'll bet Jerry had \$15 or \$20 in directory assistance charges that month. I'd get them on and I'd say, 'I'm Vern Iverson, I've got a story for you and we need your help.' I'd explain it to them, say 'Thank you very much, God bless you, goodbye.' Then, I'd make another call. I said a lot of 'God bless you's' that day."

KSTP-TV thought Iverson was playing a prank. WCCO told him they had a helicopter in the air heading to another story, and that they could divert it to St. Joseph. Iverson said he would flag down the helicopter at the intersection of Stearns County Road 2 and Interstate Highway 94, and lead it to the Wetterlings' house.

Iverson helped the WCCO crew set up interviews and, because crew members didn't have ground transportation, gave them rides to the sheriff's department mobile unit set up at the Del-Win Ballroom and to the abduction site to get film.

Iverson, an amateur pilot, rode with the WCCO chopper pilot and photographer to get aerial footage and to look around the area, to see if they could spot anything.

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## Media takes story

State helicopters began arriving, as did choppers and news teams from other TV stations, and newspapers and radio stations. Iverson coordinated the show.

He could see Patty and Jerry were befuddled by the activity.

"I sat down with them, I knew they were in shock. I told them, 'the media is going to take this story, but they're going to ask a lot of questions and some of the questions you're not going to like.'"

Iverson told them Jerry would be asked if he is homosexual, if he had anything to do with the abduction, if there is a divorce and custody fight going on, if the marriage is going bad, if some love triangle exists.

"But I told them, 'you can't show any negative reaction. It'll be tough.' I let that sink in, then I moved closer to them, looked directly at them and said it again."

"Whatever it takes to get Jacob back," Patty said.

Jerry silently nodded his head.

Iverson drove members of the media around until about 6 p.m. He left to go home, and then until about 11 p.m., he began getting fliers printed at a shop near the University of Minnesota.

The next three days, "everything was a blur."

He called politicians, tried to call anchormen Dan Rather and Tom Brokaw, and cajoled television network editors to take the story. When they balked, he pulled a little chicanery to get the network news desks talking to their Twin Cities affiliates about the story.

By this time, the story had swelled into a fireball across the state, and Iverson and other volunteers had lost track of all the people and institutions involved.

Iverson saw political, religious and economic barriers and distinctions fall away. Sen. Dave Durenberger gave a speech on the Senate floor about the kidnapping.

The state attorney general's office got the nation's law enforcement agencies, as well as those in Canada, on alert. Gov. Rudy Perpich came out to the Wetterlings' house; he asked Jerry if there was anything he could do. Jerry asked for the National Guard to begin a search. He got the National Guard, and one of the state's largest manhunts was set into motion.

## 'People cared'

White ribbons popped up everywhere, and Iverson got the Minnesota professional sports community hopping.

The North Stars wore the initial "J" on their helmets, the Vikings had special baseball caps made to wear on the sidelines during a nationally broadcast game. Oakland Athletics catcher Terry

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M/7

Steinbach, a Minnesota native, wore a tape J on the back of his batting helmet during the World Series. Steinbach is doing the same in this year's Series.

"I don't know where those things came from," Iverson said. "These things just manifested themselves. Everyone just took over. We had no control of it."

Schoolchildren made banners to hang in the Metrodome and passed out buttons and white ribbons at the state football Prep Bowl championships. Choirs, bands and singer Doug Wood, who wrote the song, "Jacob's Hope," also performed songs.

Iverson has a tape of a game and after one stirring song during halftime, the program switched back to the emotional TV announcer in the studio, who said, "How can I say anything after that? Let's go to a commercial."

"It was like someone had an egg beater and was beating these egg whites and it was just frothing. And it was a positive thing," Iverson said.

Dave Collins, whose son was abducted nearly seven years ago, and who now coordinates search efforts in abduction cases nationwide, came to help organize the Jacob search.

Collins had traveled for five years to aid searches, but was amazed at the organization and mobilization the St. Joseph and St. Cloud groups had mustered.

"You see, myself and many other people got really involved in this, but it took off only because the people of Minnesota cared.

"I think they were totally and completely appalled. Jacob was taken less

than a mile from his home, a town where people don't lock their doors and the police don't wear their guns — they probably do now, but they weren't then. Minnesotans said, 'Hold it. We've had enough.'"

The media blitz on the case continued and was reaching worldwide. A friend of Iverson's traveling from Cameroon to Switzerland called Iverson after seeing a 15-minute news program about the abduction broadcast on the flight.

When Iverson returned to his job as a chemist at Medtronic, the company installed a second phone in his office to use for his work on Jacob's case. His secretary was given directions to take calls and notes that related to the search for Jacob.

"(Medtronic) gave me total, complete clearance to use the phones at work, when I should have been doing my work as a chemist, to do this. The company said this is something that needs to be done. At any time, I was allowed to put my research down and go to the phone. I was given full rein to do what I needed."

Iverson helped other diligent volunteers organize the Jacob Wetterling Foundation. The pace kept quickening, and he was on the phone often.

"I must have made 3,000 phone calls. I had no idea what I was doing."

## Became prime suspect

But the frenzy was beginning to weaken Iverson. The pressure was intense, not only to organize the unending chores, but because he was considered a prime suspect in the abduction.

The FBI interrogated Iverson twice

for a total of five hours. They were suspicious of his contacts and activities in Central America. From 1982 to 1985, the family lived in Honduras, where Lea and Vern taught school for the Dole Fresh Fruit company.

Even after returning to build their home in Elk River, Iverson continued to work closely with two Bahai physicians in Honduras, coordinating airlifts of donated medical equipment to be used in a hospital the doctors were building in the jungles.

The FBI, in its first interview, asked him to recall minute details of his life since 1980. He agreed to submit to a lie detector test, but the test was never given.

During the second interview, the agents again proceeded with the detailed inquiries before they dropped the hammer. In a questioning tactic, the FBI interviewers told Iverson they had him nailed. They knew about his background, his Central America contacts. They wanted to know about his accomplice.

"They said, 'no one could have gotten the media to do what they did without prior knowledge,' and that I had set up the whole thing as a smokescreen. They

said, 'Your game's up. Where do you got him?'"

Iverson stood up to the hard-line questioning and repeated again what he had done, said and where he had been, obviously to the FBI's satisfaction.

Although it was grueling, he welcomed the acute scrutiny.

"I knew if they were investigating me that well, they were being extremely thorough."

## Poor health interferes

By April, Iverson's role would be over. He was suffering chest pains and he called an ambulance to pick him up at his house. For six days at Mercy Medical Center in Coon Rapids, doctors and specialists ran tests, but didn't find anything physical that might be responsible for the attacks.

The problem, they concluded, was stress.

"My body just shut down," he said.

But with the good health news came some bad news. The search for Jacob had taken as much a toll as possible and Iverson's role in it would have to end.

He could chip in when necessary, but the impassioned work would be finished. Iverson had his own family that needed his presence, needed him to be alive.

Iverson called Jerry and said he had to resign from the Jacob Wetterling Foundation.

His time in the hospital had prepared him to disengage from the cause.

"I called and said, 'Jerry, I want it to work, too, but I can't die for Jacob. I have two lovely children to raise.'"

Iverson said he was able to leave the full-time endeavor without guilt.

"I feel very sad that Jacob is not home, but I feel very good that in a moment of crisis, I jumped out of bed at five minutes to 12 and didn't stop for six months until my body had a breakdown. It was a big load off my mind. I felt like I had completed my work. I gave my all to the point it nearly killed me."

**Friday:** Jacob's abduction deeply touched and troubled Cindy Lovold and her family. Like hundreds in Central Minnesota, she spent hours working to get the word out to millions.

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Times photo by Kimm Anderson

Vern Iverson, Elk River, holds some of the publications that did stories about Jacob Wetterling's disappearance. A friend of the Wetterlings and a strong volunteer in the search effort, Iverson was the person who convinced the family that telling the media the whole story of Jacob's disappearance could make their search more effective.

7013



disappeared in 1987:

# Investigators haven't forgotten 1-year-old Monique Burnett

It's been 4½ years since Marjorie Monique Burnett disappeared somewhere between her Capitol Hill home and her downtown visitor's, but thoughts of the 11-year-old stay with the Shelton Police Department detectives.

Monique, whose bones were found in September 1988, on Day Peak, would have been 16 years old tomorrow.

"We would like the community to know that we have not forgotten about Monique and will continue our efforts to investigate this case," said Shelton Police Chief S. "Johnny" Johnston.

**THE SHELTON POLICE** department recently sought and received information and assistance on the case from two out-of-town entities.

The department has acquired information from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Violent Criminal Apprehension Program, unit of the FBI Behavioral Sciences Unit at Quantico, Virginia.

Closer to home, police officers held a conference with Seattle Police Detective Bob Gebo, the only homicide investigator in the state who has received the FBI Behavioral Sciences Unit training. Gebo has created a suspect profile in the case, Johnston said. Shelton Police Detective Gary Martzall noted that members of the local force who have had some experience in profiling were grateful for the confirmation, and the new information, also provided. "It's always helpful to have someone from the outside who's not attached to the case," he said.

"Gebo combines the studies of human behavior with the known behaviors of similar homicide acts throughout the United States, and compares those with the known facts and evidence of the case he is profiling," Johnston explained. "He then renders a probable profile of the suspect to

aid investigators in their focus of possible suspects."

**THE SUSPECT PROFILE** Detective Gebo has created, and which local police believe is likely to describe Monique's abductor, describes the suspect as "definitely" a white male and says his personality is "immature" and "very inadequate."

That inadequacy, according to the profile, extends to his life: his personal relationships, his employment and maybe even the vehicles he drives, if he does drive.

"Gebo," Johnston said, "believes that (the suspect) is more than likely a local person, that this was a crime of opportunity with no advance planning and that the suspect did not begin with an intent to kill his victim."

The profile, he continued, would indicate that the suspect "has remorse for what he has done and it still bothers him a lot, although he may fear that he won't be believed if he comes forward."

**JOHNSTON SAID** Gebo believes that the abduction and subsequent murder "did not go the way the suspect intended, and he found it so unpleasant and shocking that he has not repeated it."

It's possible, the police chief said, that the suspect abused drugs and/or alcohol at the time Monique disappeared, and that the abuse may have lessened his inhibitions. He may have become much better — or much worse — with his abuse problem since the event, Johnston and Gebo theorized.

The Seattle detective said he believed that people around the suspect would have noticed definite indications of emotional distress in the hours and days around December 14, 1987 when Monique disappeared. Based on Gebo's profile, the suspect "more than likely lives with friends or relatives most of the time," Johnston added.

The investigation of Monique's

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Supplied  
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St. Cloud, Minnesota 5630

A Gannett Newspaper

May 31, 1992

# St. Cloud Times

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## Wetterling Foundation tries to douse internal fires

After a staff shakeup, the board wants a timeout to define its goals. But the foundation still is accepting calls about the missing St. Joseph boy.

By TODD J. BEHME

Times Staff Writer

Staffers got no advance notice they were being released from their jobs. Volunteers found out on TV. Tears of frustration befell Patty and Jerry Wetterling and seemingly everybody who has put their heart into the Jacob Wetterling Foundation.

By all accounts, the foundation treated its people poorly. Feelings were hurt, trust lost and suspicion born among a host of people working for an organization committed to caring.

"It's overwhelmingly unanimous that Jerry and Patty screwed up royally and that nobody deserved to be treated this way," said Ron Marotte, formerly the foundation's executive director and a longtime friend of the Wetterlings.

That mistake in judgment, perhaps indicative of internal problems that have plagued the 21-year-old non-profit organization the last several months.

Marotte is frustrated and fearful. Frustrated because as executive director, he and board members disagreed on major philosophical points. Fearful because he thinks the board's decision to downshift for the summer jeopardizes the continuation of its already-impressive list of accomplishments.

Earlier this month the five-member executive committee of the foundation board decided to release Marotte and its two other paid staffers while it regrouped and tries to refocus over the summer. Board members insist the foundation is not closed and that calls will be answered.

The foundation was incorporated in October 1989, almost immediately after Jacob Wetterling, now 14, was snatched by a masked gunman from a road near his home in rural St. Joseph. He still is missing. The foundation has grown from a core group of people who wanted desperately to find Jacob into a nationally regarded clearinghouse for information about other cases and the crime of child abduction.

Another unforeseen misfortune befell Marotte. Just as the board made its decision a series of specials aired on WCCO-TV for which Marotte Foundation/7A



Ron Marotte  
Foundation director released

## Changes left former director 'flabbergasted'

By TODD J. BEHME  
Times Staff Writer

Speaking badly of his longtime friends, Patty and Jerry Wetterling, and of the Jacob Wetterling Foundation's board members, clearly is difficult for Ron Marotte.

Yet their recent decisions, which culminated with the release of Marotte and the two other paid staffers, just as clearly has left Marotte hurt, angry and frustrated.

"I'm very mad at Jerry and Patty," he said. "I am absolutely outraged at them and feel very betrayed by them."

The board's five-member executive committee, of which Patty is a member, decided to release Marotte and the others while it defines more clearly how to meet its goals.

Marotte disagrees vehemently with that decision. He fears the foundation could lose much of the momentum it has built over 2 1/4 years.

Marotte also represents the human cost of an organization in transition. His release coincided with the beginning of a series of WCCO-TV reports about the Wetterling investigation. The stories were based largely on information Marotte provided about the search for Jacob, now 14 and still missing after being abducted in October 1989 near his rural St. Joseph home.

Marotte gave WCCO tip sheets on Marotte/7A

LAP-331



4TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN)

April 15, 1993, Metro Edition

SECTION: News; Pg. 1B

LENGTH: 1181 words

HEADLINE: A little girl's big recovery;  
Despite beating, Miranda Paffel does her best to resume a child's life

BYLINE: Maureen M. Smith; Staff Writer

DATELINE: Shell Lake, Wis.

BODY:

Chewing a wad of bubble gum and clutching a drawing of a koala bear, 10-year-old Miranda Paffel seems like any other kid.

But last May, doctors wondered whether she would live. She had been with friends at the beach, wandered away and was found unconscious and severely beaten in a roadside ditch several hours later. Every bone in her head and face was broken, except her lower jaw.

She remained in a coma for several weeks at North Memorial Medical Center in Robbinsdale, and then slowly relearned how to walk, talk and recognize family members before returning home in July.

A \$ 10,000 reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest of her assailant. But despite many leads, no arrests have been made and the beating remains a mystery. Miranda remembers nothing about the attack.

At school, "Mandy" now jumps rope in the playground, memorizes multiplication tables and sometimes gets in trouble with teachers. She gets help in speech, physical education and other special-education classes. Although she has permanent brain damage, scars on her forehead and nose and is blind in her left eye, her life is more normal than anyone expected.

"I just like being there [at school]," Miranda said after school recently. "I got in trouble today; I was laughing at my teacher. I like to laugh at everything. I had to take a chair and turn it and look at the wall."

After school, Miranda and a sea of young faces flood onto the yellow school buses outside. She and her brother, Michael, 11, take a 20-minute ride to their mobile home. They scramble in the door, grinning and teasing each other.

"Oh, my God," Miranda says with a grin at almost every comment her brother makes. Her long, sandy-brown hair whips around as she plops into a vinyl chair. She proudly displays a pencil sketch of an animal, with "Rainforest" scrawled in big green letters on top.

"It's a koala bear," she tells her grandmother, Linda Bos, who was caring for her while her mother, Pam Bos, was out of town.

It was a sunny, warm Saturday last May 15 when Miranda, Michael and some friends were at the Shell Lake beach, near a restaurant where Pam Bos worked as a waitress. The lake is the main summer attraction for both tourists and residents in the city of about 1,300 people.

"This is a town where the kids run all over," Linda Bos said. "Mike came back up to the restaurant to ask his mom for some money for pop, and Miranda was gone when he got back. He assumed she went home, so he went back there, but she wasn't there. They called her friends; nobody could find her."

Several hours later, two women walking about 4 miles southwest of Shell Lake found Miranda, who was then 9, unconscious in a ditch. Authorities say she was probably brought there in a vehicle. Her face and head had been beaten repeatedly with a blunt instrument such as a baseball bat, and she may have been sexually assaulted, investigators said.

"I just can't believe how this happened in town, in broad daylight, and nobody saw it," Linda Bos said.

The family told Miranda about the attack when she was released from the hospital on July 29.

"What she knows is from what we've told her or what she's seen on TV," said Linda Bos. "She didn't even believe us at first when we told her. The first thing she said is, 'Nobody would do that to me.'"

Together, the brain damage and sheer emotional trauma make it unlikely that Miranda will ever remember the incident, said J. Michael Bitney, Washburn County district attorney.

"I wish Miranda could remember," Bitney said. "She's been unable to recall anything regarding the attack, which is not surprising."

Washburn County Sheriff Terry Dryden said that investigators interviewed Miranda, her brother and friends who were with her when she disappeared, and more than 50 other people. In late March, the reward was increased from \$ 5,000 to \$ 10,000. The money is offered by the Sheriff's Department and a trust fund created for Miranda.

"We're hoping it will bring some people forward and help us solve this case," Dryden said. "We're frustrated with the investigation."

Several suspects have been considered. An FBI profile indicated that the suspect may be a heavy drinker and probably was acquainted with Miranda, Dryden said. The profile takes into account circumstances such as the manner of the assault and where the victim was left.

Dryden said that Bradley Brimblecom, a 28-year-old Shell Lake man who is described as the boyfriend of Pam Bos, is still a suspect. Investigators questioned Brimblecom after the assault, but there was insufficient evidence to charge him at the time.

Star Tribune (Minneapolis, MN), April 15, 1993

Brimblecom had been charged earlier with molesting but those charges were dismissed in June 1992 because of insufficient evidence.

People in Shell Lake have also grown frustrated that a suspect has not been apprehended, said Terry O'Brien, the Chamber of Commerce president who owns and runs a barbershop.

"The crime was horrible, that's absolutely for certain. We're thankful that she is well and back on her feet," O'Brien said. "There's somebody out there that knows what happened. If she can't put her finger on it, we certainly hope someone else does."

A court order requires that Miranda never be left alone; she is always supervised by an adult family member authorized by the court, family members said.

"She can't be out in the front yard without a supervisor," said Pam Bos. "She can't spend the night at other kids' houses or go to birthday parties. We were thinking about her going to the beach this summer. But this year, that's not going to happen."

"She's a pretty happy-go-lucky kid. It's kind of put her in a spot. But things are a heck of a lot better than I ever thought they would be."

Miranda said she doesn't like being watched.

"I hate it," she said. "I don't like people going with me like a baby. But I was hurt. [And] I don't like being on TV."

Although she now recognizes her close family members, she occasionally calls cousins by the wrong name. And she has had to become reacquainted with some friends at school, Pam Bos said.

"I remember when we first got home, kids came up and said, 'You've got to remember me,' but she just didn't."

At school, Miranda attends classes in math, reading and spelling that are somewhat lighter than the standard curriculum. Psychologists say she will always have difficulty with memory, comprehension and verbal expression.

She will be getting safety glasses so she can play basketball and other sports without risking hurting her good eye. Art is one of her favorite subjects, although she also likes the playground, teachers said.

"She's real outgoing when she's out on the playground," said Gloria Johnson, a special-education instructor. "Her memory really seems to be improving. She's working on her multiplication tables. She can multiply now without any help."

GRAPHIC: Photograph

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: April 17, 1993



# Boy, 8, severely beaten by man in abandoned S. Boston bathhouse

By Alexander Reid  
GLOBE STAFF

An 8-year-old boy playing with a friend along Carson Beach in South Boston was brutally beaten Tuesday afternoon by an unidentified stranger in a bathhouse, police said yesterday.

The victim, who police did not identify because of his age, was listed in stable but guarded condition last night at Boston City Hospital. He suffered a concussion, a broken nose and bruises to the head, said Metropolitan Police officer Brian Hermes.

The attack occurred at 1 p.m. According to Hermes, the victim was playing with a 10-year-old friend on the beach when they were approached by a man who lured him into the abandoned bathhouse.

After several minutes the 10-year-old, who was still outside the house, heard the victim screaming. The friend ran to find help and located several men who went into the bath house to stop the attack.

By then, said Hermes, the attacker had fled. Hermes said that it was unclear whether a sexual assault occurred.

"We haven't been able to determine if the child was sexually assaulted yet," said Hermes. "We have tried to interview him but he was in no condition to talk with our investigators so we have to postpone the interview."

The bathhouse, which overlooks Carson Beach, has been abandoned since 1989 when funding cuts under the Dukakis administration forced the MDC to close it.

Hermes said there had been no reports of criminal activity or assaults at the building since it closed. "That area doesn't have a reputation for crimes," he said, adding "we have looked at our records and checked with the Boston Police Department and have come up with no incidents near that building."

Nevertheless, Rep. Paul Gannon (D-South Boston) said he will file



Police issued this composite sketch of the suspect in the Carson Beach beating.

legislation to have the building demolished.

"The MDC hasn't used this building for two years and if they have no plan to use it in the future, it should be torn down," he said.

The area around the bathhouse is a popular spot for sunbathers and joggers. It is also a favorite location for people who park their cars nearby to view Boston Harbor.

Several people interviewed yesterday said they have rarely seen any type of trouble in the area.

"I come here to run about twice a week and never saw anything out of line here," said William Bishop of Dorchester. "The building's an eyesore but it never concerned me that much."

Matt Kenney, 18, a student at Bentley College, said, "We were here yesterday when they said it happened and saw the commotion when the police arrived, but didn't think it was anything serious. "It was probably a drunk or something," he said.

Police described the assailant as white, 25 to 30 years old, about 5-foot-7, with a medium build and dark brown hair.

## CRIME SOLVERS

The attempted kidnapping of a 13-year-old boy at the Wheaton Plaza shopping center Aug. 16 is the subject of the county police's Crime Solvers program.

Police will pay a \$1,000 reward for information leading to an arrest or indictment in the case.

The incident occurred near the University Boulevard entrance to the shopping center shortly after 5 p.m. The boy was walking along the sidewalk near the Hot Shoppes cafeteria when he was grabbed by a man standing next to a parked car. The man tried to force the boy into the car, which was occupied by two other men.

The boy kicked the man and managed to escape, police said.

The three men drove away. A passer-by who helped the boy and chased the suspects, left before police could speak to him.

The passer-by is described as a black male wearing brown clothing resembling a uniform.

The suspects are described as white males. The first is about 55 years old, 5 feet 9 inches tall, weighing 190 pounds with receding gray hair. The man also has a noticeable wart on the left side of his nose, police said. The second suspect is about 47 years old, 5 feet 10 inches tall, stocky, with blond and gray hair. The third suspect is probably Hispanic, about 40 years old with black hair combed straight back, police said.

The suspects' car is described as an older model four-door, full-size vehicle, possibly a Pontiac. It is light brown and has Virginia license tags.

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Crime Solvers also is investigating the July shooting of two men outside a Silver Spring apartment complex.



Sketch of man sought in attempted kidnapping.

Police will pay a \$1,000 reward for the anonymous tip that leads to an arrest or an indictment in the case.

The shooting occurred shortly before 3 a.m. July 28 outside 1008 Quebec Terrace. A group of people had just left a party at the building when several shots were fired from the side of the building. Two young men were hit and injured in the shooting, police said.

Both men since have left the hospital and are recovering from their injuries, investigators said. Investigators have yet to determine a motive for the shooting and would like to speak to anyone who may have information about the attempted murder.

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People with information about either incident, the identities of the suspects, the passer-by or the vehicle, are asked to call Crime Solvers at 217-2255. All calls are anonymous.

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# St. Paul man charged in pedophilia case

## Police say boy considered instructor, 44, his mentor

By Curt Brown  
Star Tribune Staff Writer

A St. Paul first-aid instructor was charged Thursday with first-degree criminal sexual conduct involving a 15-year-old boy. Police say the boy considered David Paul Weiss, 44, to be his mentor, and the two went camping together on trips in the past year to Rochester and New Urm.

Police say the victim might be the latest in more than 20 years of pedophilia involving Weiss, but the seven-year statute of limitations precludes charges stemming from allegations dating as far back as 1975.



David Paul Weiss

Weiss, a HealthEast paramedic and part-time emergency care instructor at the University of St. Thomas, was charged in Ramsey

County and was being held in lieu of \$250,000 bail. He is expected to make his first court appearance today. If convicted, he could face a seven-year prison term under state sentencing guidelines. Police say a group of men came forward recently and prompted the investigation of Weiss, who has lived in St. Paul for the last five years.

Turn to CHARGES on B2

Star Trib 8/6/97

### CHARGES from B1

## Police say victim in assault case could be latest in 20-year string

Police asked for the public's help in the investigation Wednesday and, despite receiving a few calls Thursday, spokesman Jack Rhodes of the Ramsey County attorney's office said they lack evidence so far to file additional charges in more recent cases. According to a criminal complaint filed Thursday, the victim's mother told police she allowed

her son to stay at Weiss' house, where the boy alleges that two acts of oral sex and several acts of masturbation took place. The mother considered Weiss a "father figure to the boy" following her divorce, and she gave her son permission to join Weiss on the camping trips, according to the complaint. Said McGinn, "Pedophiles are very, very good at what

they do, and in many cases they ingratiate themselves among juveniles who are vulnerable." Police seized many videotapes, computer disks and guns from Weiss' house during his arrest Wednesday. Weiss was convicted on a misdemeanor weapons charge earlier this year and sentenced to one year of probation, but apparently this is the first charge against him alleging sexual misconduct. St. Thomas spokesman Jim Winterer said the criminal charge "came as quite a surprise" to university officials, who had received positive recommendations

from students about Weiss. Winterer said Weiss, a 1978 St. Thomas graduate, has worked as a part-time instructor for 17 years. He taught a physical education class in emergency care each semester, but Winterer said his one-year contract will not be renewed. A HealthEast spokesman confirmed that Weiss worked there "on and off for the last five or 10 years." St. Paul police urge people with more information about Weiss' case to call the sex crimes unit at 292-3685.

### St. Paul

## St. Paul man charged with abusing boy, 15

ST. PAUL (AP) — A man suspected of abusing children throughout Minnesota over the last 22 years was charged Thursday with sexually abusing a 15-year-old boy.

David Weiss, 44, of St. Paul was charged with one count of first-degree criminal sexual conduct. He was being held in the Ramsey County jail. Police said Weiss may have abused other children as he traveled as a first-aid instructor.

Authorities have asked the public to help identify possible victims. Anyone with information about the case should contact the St. Paul Police Department's Sex Crimes Unit at (612) 292-3685.

am



# FAX

M/10

**Date:** Monday, August 18, 1997

**Time:** 3:32:00 PM

**4 Pages**

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**To:** Bob Lee  
Wetterling Foundation

**From:** Dawn Duffy  
PR Newswire

**Fax:** 1-320-363-0473

**Voice:** 941-9372

**Fax:** 1-888-PRNEWS-8

**Voice:** 331-7800, ext. 3

---

**Comments:**

9/19/10

M/11

# PR NEWSWIRE

800-582-5154

ext. 3; fax 888-PRNEWS8

## Broadcast Newsclips Transcript

**DATE** August 14, 1997  
**STATION** KMSP-TV, Channel Nine  
**TIME** 9 p.m.  
**ANCHOR** Robyne Robinson  
**REPORTER** Doug Stoddart

### ROBYNE ROBINSON

Also tonight, the FBI is investigating a possible link between the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling and a St. Paul man. Forty-four-year-old David Paul Weiss was charged last week with sexually molesting a teenager. Tonight, FBI agents are trying to figure out if he knows something about Jacob's kidnapping in 1989. Here's Doug Stoddart with the story.

### DOUG STODDART

It was the roommate of 44-year-old David Paul Weiss that led St. Paul investigators to search Weiss' home after he suspected the first aid instructor was molesting young boys. That raid uncovered evidence that Weiss could be a pedophile who may have molested numerous children over the past two decades. He's now charged with sexually molesting a 15-year-old boy. That same roommate now has FBI investigators looking into Weiss' possible connections with the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling nearly eight years ago in St. Joseph. Back in 1990 or 1991, Weiss reportedly discussed the Wetterling case with his roommate and even told him that he knows where a body is in Fort Snelling cemetery where flowers are thrown away. He told investigators Weiss even talked about how to commit the perfect crime by grinding up a body in a mulch machine. A 1989 sketch of the Wetterling suspect draws a striking resemblance to Weiss. This police composite of the suspect was made just day's after Jacob was kidnapped in front of his brother and friends on October 22, 1989. Earlier this year, St. Paul police arrested Weiss for carrying a gun without a permit. But it's what investigators found inside his home that is most troubling. A search warrant shows he had numerous guns, pornography, pictures of young boys, a sex crimes digital video disc and perhaps the most disturbing item — a container with what appears to be testicles. Now, again, we want to stress Weiss is not a suspect in Wetterling's disappearance at the moment. The FBI is simply looking into possible connections following his roommate's statements to investigators. Agents still have a lot of confiscated evidence to pour over. This is just one of the many tips the Wetterling case has received over the years and investigators want to check it out thoroughly.

####

9/19/97

M/12

# PR NEWSWIRE

800-582-5154  
ext. 3; fax 888-PRNEWS8

## Broadcast Newsclips Transcript

DATE August 14, 1997  
STATION KARE-TV, Channel Eleven  
TIME 10 p.m.  
ANCHOR Diana Pierce

### DIANA PIERCE

The FBI tonight is looking into whether suspected pedophile David Paul Weiss knows something about the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling. In a St. Paul police search warrant, Weiss' roommate says the suspect told him in 1990 that Jacob's body is buried in Fort Snelling's cemetery. The FBI is investigating this latest claim, as they do all Jacob Wetterling leads. Weiss is accused of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old boy.

####

9/16/98



M/13

# PR NEWSWIRE

800-582-5154

ext. 3; fax 888-PRNEWS8

## Broadcast Newsclips Transcript

DATE August 14, 1997  
STATION KSTP-TV, Channel Five  
TIME 10 p.m.  
ANCHOR Randy Meier

### RANDY MEIER

The FBI is investigating statements suspected St. Paul pedophile David Weiss allegedly made about the Jacob Wetterling case. We told you last night a police affidavit shows Weiss once mentioned Jacob and told his roommate he knows where a body is buried in the Fort Snelling cemetery, in a place where dead flowers are thrown away. Weiss said he helped look for a body there with police. Police took boxes of evidence out of Weiss' home in a search last week. He is charged with assaulting a teenage boy. The Stearns County sheriff says it is too early to say how serious investigators are taking the Wetterling comments. Sources tell Eyewitness News they're doubtful Weiss was involved in Jacob's disappearance in 1989.

####

area

To the man who took Jacob,

I often wonder does October 22 mean anything to you? Do you remember the young boy you took from us? Do you still have him with you? He's an adult now, but just as loved and still dearly missed. Do you know the person you took?

Jacob was born February 17, 1978. He has his Grandpa's middle name. He loved sports and was incredibly competitive, especially with his younger brother. They played, and they'd fight and then they'd fall asleep, each with one arm wrapped around the other. He fished with his Dad, and he had lots of friends. He was most known for his sense of fairness. Even if it had nothing to do with him it always bothered him when things weren't fair.

He tried hard at whatever he did. He was goalie for his hockey team. I remember asking him did it ever bother him when somebody scored on him? He said not really. If I stopped it, it was a great save. If it went in, it was a great shot!

You took away a wonderful person. Someone who probably would have stood up for you if things weren't fair. Did no one do nice things for you?

I have found some comfort picturing you not as a mean old ugly bad guy, but at one time, you were an eleven-year old boy. Someone's son . . . possibly someone's brother needing and hopefully sharing the love an 11-year-old boy deserves. If this love wasn't shared in your family, I'm sorry. Every child is entitled to the love and caring that family and friends provide.

If you still have Jacob, I wish for something good to happen to you, like catching a really big fish. Hopefully then, you will treat him well. I hope you have peaceful moments where you can walk in the woods or on a beach, content, not miserable and vindictive.

I have a hard time getting through anniversary dates. Still not knowing where Jacob is, I continue to talk to him. Birthdays, holidays, but especially now. Where are you Jacob? What next? I talk to God, praying for Jacob, and even struggling with trying to pray for you.

If only I could talk to you.

I'm not sure what I would say, although after so much time, surprisingly, I don't hate you. I know nothing about you. I wonder, were you ever like Jacob? Did you also love peanut butter? Did you sneeze when you looked at the sun? Did you play jokes on April Fools Day? Jacob is not just a kid on a poster. His mom and dad, Amy, Carmen and miss him daily. He has dreams, and hopes and potential.

I still have positive dreams. For my own survival, I have had to let go of a lot of anger or I would be swallowed up in it. But the questions persist. I pray that God will smile down on us all this year and bring us some peace. All I'm asking for is your response; a call to allow me and all the people whose lives Jacob touched to find peace and a sense of calm that disappeared that night in 1989. The peace that can't return until the questions surrounding Jacob's disappearance are answered. You have held the answers for so long. You also hold the pain. Please talk to me.

5/14/88  
328

Frankenstein

tree time  
www.startribune.com



Published Thursday, October 22, 1998

## Text of Patty Wetterling's letter

To the man who took Jacob,

I often wonder, does October 22 mean anything to you? Do you remember the young boy you took from us? Do you still have him with you? He's an adult now, but just as loved and still dearly missed. Do you know the person you took?

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He tried hard at whatever he did. He was goalie for his hockey team. I remember asking him, did it ever bother him when somebody scored on him? He said not really. If I stopped it, it was a great save. If it went in, it was a great shot!

You took away a wonderful person. Someone who probably would have stood up for you if things weren't fair. Did no one do nice things for you?

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If you still have Jacob, I wish for something good to happen to you, like catching a really big fish. Hopefully then, you will treat him well. I hope you have peaceful moments where you can walk in the woods or on a beach, content, not miserable and vindictive.

I have a hard time getting through anniversary dates. Still not knowing where Jacob is, I continue to talk to him. Birthdays, holidays, but especially now. Where are you, Jacob? What next? I talk to God, praying for Jacob, and even struggling with trying to



M/15

pray for you.

If only I could talk to you.

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startribune.com

Meira

• **Written by Patty Wetterling, mother of Jacob Wetterling, who was abducted nine years ago.**

• **If you have information in the Wetterling case**, call the Stearns County Sheriff's Department, 1-320-251-4240; the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), 651-642-0610, or the FBI, 612-376-3200.

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M/15



## THE CURE FOR THE COMMON



Published Thursday, October 22, 1998

### A mom's letter to Jacob's abductor: 'Please talk to me'

James Walsh / Star Tribune

She has lobbied the Legislature, founded a foundation and raised awareness of missing children. But today is Oct. 22, and Patty Wetterling just wants people to remember that she's a mom.

She's a mom who lost her son to a masked abductor exactly nine years ago.

Patty Wetterling especially wants *him* to know that. So she wrote the man a letter -- an open letter telling of her son's love for hockey and playing April Fools' Day jokes. It's also a plea that he will find it in his heart to call her and tell her what he's done with Jacob and why.

"I have a hard time getting through anniversary dates," Patty Wetterling wrote. "Still not knowing where Jacob is, I continue to talk to him. Birthdays, holidays, but especially now. Where are you, Jacob? What next? I talk to God, praying for Jacob, and even struggling with trying to pray for you. If only I could talk to you."

Jacob would be 20 years old now.

Officials have included telephone numbers for people to call if they have information about Jacob. There's the number for the Stearns County Sheriff's Department, 1-320-251-4240; the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA), 651-642-0610, and the FBI, 612-376-3200.

Michael Campion, assistant superintendent of the BCA, said it's worth a shot. Investigators still get a call once in a while. And similar letters written by parents of missing children have led to the resolution of cases elsewhere in the country.

Patty Wetterling isn't expecting that. She's hoping for just one call.

"I'm not sure what I would say, although after so much time, surprisingly, I don't hate you," she wrote. "I wonder, were you ever like Jacob? Did you also love peanut butter? Did you sneeze when you looked at the sun? . . . Jacob is not just a kid on a poster. His

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mom and dad, Amy, Carmen and Trevor miss him daily. He has dreams and hopes and potential."

She said she got the idea of writing a letter from a newspaper story about another missing child. "I don't spend a lot of time thinking about the guy who took Jacob," Patty Wetterling said Wednesday. "And it made me do that."




It got her thinking that this man must also be living with pain, with guilt, with the difficulty of concealing a secret for so long. She said she thought that an appeal to him -- as a onetime child -- might spur him to speak. At least to a mom.

"I need to know what happened," Patty Wetterling said. "And, perhaps, this person needs to tell."

-- *To read the full text of Patty Wetterling's letter, visit <http://www.startribune.com/metro>.*

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4D STATE/REGION

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, Friday, Oct. 23, 1998

# Patty Wetterling puts hope in letter nine years after son's kidnapping

The Associated Press

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. — Patty Wetterling has founded a foundation and raised awareness of missing children.

But today, Wetterling just wants people to remember her as a mom.

"To the man who took Jacob" is how Patty Wetterling begins an



Jacob  
Wetterling  
in 1989

open letter on the ninth anniversary of her son's abduction.

Patty Wetterling asked newspapers to publish the letter on Thursday.

"I have a hard time getting through anniversary dates," she wrote. "Still

not knowing where Jacob is, I continue to talk to him. Birthdays, holidays, but especially now. Where are you, Jacob? What next? I talk to God, praying for Jacob, and even struggling with trying to pray for you. If only I could talk to you."

Jacob would be 20 years old now. A masked gunman abducted Jacob, then 11, on Oct. 22, 1989, as he, his brother and a friend rode their bikes near the Wetterlings' home.

Neither Jacob nor the man who kidnapped him has been found despite extensive searches and investigation by the FBI. The case remains open.

"I often wonder does October 22 mean anything to you? Do you remember the young boy you took from us?" Patty Wetterling wrote.

She describes how her son enjoyed fishing with his father, Jerry, fighting with his younger brother, Trevor, and playing hockey.

"I have found some comfort picturing you not as a mean old ugly bad guy, but at one time, you were an 11-year-old boy," she wrote. "Someone's son... possibly someone's brother needing and hopefully sharing the love an 11-year-old boy deserves. If this love wasn't shared in your family, I'm sorry."

Patty Wetterling said she wants "to touch that little kid inside of this man and see if he would talk to me."

She said she hasn't given up hope that Jacob is still alive, and she's hoping the man who holds the answers to his disappearance will come forward.

She said she got the idea of writing a letter from a newspaper story about another missing child. She said she thinks this man must also be living with pain and guilt, with the difficulty of concealing a secret

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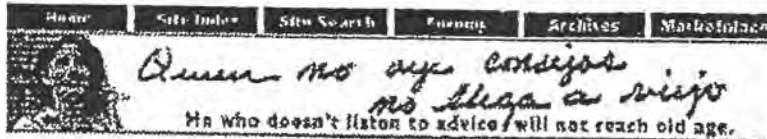
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Son Abducted 9 Years Ago, Mother Hangs On to ...

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## National

The New York Times



December 31, 1998

## Son Abducted 9 Years Ago, Mother Hangs On to Hope



Forum

Join a Discussion on National Issues: The Parent's View

By DIRK JOHNSON

**S** T. JOSEPH, Minn. — It is the middle of the night, as Patty Wetterling sits on the living room couch, staring out the window, waiting for her boy, Jacob, to come home.

She has been waiting for nine years.

"I still, deep in my heart, believe it is possible that he's alive," said Ms. Wetterling, who hung Jacob's stocking from the fireplace mantel again this year, as she does every Christmas season. "Sometimes I look out the window and expect to see him come running up the driveway."

Jacob was 11 years old when he was abducted by a man with a gun in this small town on Oct. 22, 1989. His brother, Trevor, who was 10, and a friend, Aaron, 11, were with Jacob that night. The three boys were riding their bicycles home from the Tom Thumb convenience store, where they had rented a movie, "Naked Gun," when a man wearing a mask stepped out of a driveway. The man told Trevor and Aaron to run, or he would shoot them. And then he took Jacob.

No arrest has ever been made. No body has ever been found. All that remains is uncertainty.

For the Wetterling family, the uncertainty has meant nearly a decade of life lived in the half-step, not quite here, not quite there, reluctant to lose themselves completely to the moment, moving ahead with daily routines, because there is no choice, learning to sing again, even to laugh, but never as freely, or lightly, as before.

There is the burden of doubt known to people who live with mysterious holes in the family fabric, voids that go unexplained, losses that are never properly mourned; people who can only wonder at what became of a father, last known living in some faraway place, or a sister, tormented by emotional demons until vanishing into the streets, or a child, who went out to play one day and somehow crossed paths with evil.

Jacob Erwin Wetterling was born on Feb. 17, 1978, a boy who liked to celebrate his birthday with his grandpa, who loved to fish with his dad, Jerry, who slept with one arm around his brother, Trevor.

A great fan of sports, he played soccer, hockey, baseball and football, and so worshiped Marcus Allen, the star Los Angeles running back, that he named his dog Marcus, and dressed the pup in a Raider's jersey.

He could never eat enough peanut butter or guacamole. He was famous around the house for playing

tricks on his mother for April Fool's, and for making her beautiful artwork for Mother's Day.

The abduction of the sixth grader in this town 75 miles north of Minneapolis, initially drew hundreds of law enforcement officials. But the case no longer gets much attention. It has faded from the headlines in the Minnesota newspapers. Agents for the FBI pulled out years ago. Only the local sheriff's department keeps close tabs anymore. 11 ?

But Patty and Jerry Wetterling keep looking.

"One morning, I lay in bed and couldn't go on anymore," said Ms. Wetterling. "It was too hard. I pulled the covers up over my head and decided I was never going to get out of that bed again."

But then she envisioned Jacob. He was huddled in a corner, saying he was going to give up.

And she found herself speaking out loud: "Hold on, Jacob. We're going to find you."

"So I pulled myself out of bed and took a shower, and went out to find him," she said. "And that's what I do every day."

Searching faces on buses and trains, at construction sites and shopping malls, Ms. Wetterling looks for a young man with brown hair and blue eyes, probably about 6 feet tall now, with a 21st birthday just around the corner.

Ms. Wetterling started a foundation, Jacob's Hope, which focuses on the plight of missing and exploited children, a forum that gives her a chance to talk with law enforcement officers across the nation and keep her son's case from being forgotten.

Some leads still come, but none has panned out. There are people who call, from all over the country, and say they think they have seen Jacob, sometimes sending pictures. There are con artists who call and ask about a reward. There are sadistic pranksters who call to try to twist their minds.

The Wetterlings came home one night and switched on the answering machine. The voice of a young man whispered into the telephone. "This is Jacob Wetterling," he said. "And I want you to know I'm still alive."

The Wetterlings felt certain it was not Jacob, but there remained a shred of wonder.

"It's been so long," Ms. Wetterling said. "Would we recognize his voice?"

The police traced the call and determined it was bogus.

Plenty of psychics have called, some looking for self-promotion, some apparently driven by a misguided hope to help bring an end to their doubts.

"Jacob is cold and dead," said one caller, who identified himself as a psychic in New York.

Ms. Wetterling responded with outrage.

"Because you had some funny feeling arising in New York," she said, "you decide to call and tell me to just quit and give up."

Before the horror of the abduction, the Wetterlings led a seemingly charmed life, a popular and handsome family with a sense of playfulness and idealism.

Jerry Wetterling, a chiropractor with a growing business in town, was president of the local branch of the NAACP. His wife, a former math teacher, stayed home with the children, was president of the PTA and a soccer coach.

The eldest child, Amy, was sailing through school like a yacht. Jacob and Trevor were confident and happy-go-lucky. The youngest, Carmen, raced at life like fire across the prairie.

But then came the earthquake, in the words of an aunt in San Francisco, that never stopped.

Amy started to carry the world on her shoulders, driven to excel in everything she did, certain it was her role to make the world right. Carmen began to withdraw socially, especially as she neared age 11.

The parents worried most about Trevor. They looked him in the eyes and talked to him about the abduction, the night when his parents and police officers asked him a thousand questions.

"You have to know that there was nothing different that you could have done," his mother told him. But to this day, she does not know if he believes that.

Jacob had been an outstanding hockey player, a goalie on the traveling team. When it came Trevor's turn to join the travel team, he suited up, skated once around the rink, and walked off.

"I quit," he told his father, and never went back.

He is a student at St. Cloud State University, just 10 miles from home. He has never much liked to be alone, a trait his mother calls "a survival skill," and he has not wanted to go far from home.

"I'll pay you to go to that college you've talked about in Colorado," his mother said she has told him. But Trevor is not ready to go far from home yet.

Amy recently graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in psychology and a minor in criminal justice. Carmen is a junior at St. Joseph High School.

Since there was no extra time for anything but comforting the children, and searching for Jacob, the parents gave up their duties at the NAACP, and the PTA. Ms. Wetterling abandoned her plans to return to teaching part-time.

Jacob's class of 1996 seemed to carry him with them. He was given a page in the school yearbook. The hockey team listed his name on the roster, since he should have been playing. The football team dedicated its season to Jacob, and then surprised everyone by winning the Central Lakes Conference championship.

The abduction of Jacob robbed some of the innocence of his classmates, a burden they seemed to carry all the way through school. On the day of their graduation, the principal called the Wetterlings and asked them to speak to the departing seniors.

"Somebody has got to set them free," the principal said.

Ms. Wetterling reminded the students about Jacob, a boy who was not afraid to try anything.

"Jacob believed in a world of possibility and potential," his mother said. "Let your spirits soar."

In the last few years, Jacob's world has changed without his knowing it. He lost his grandpa last year. Marcus, his dog, died a few years ago. And the fields near home have become thick with new houses, a subdivision called Pound Meadow Ridge.

His father, who just turned 50, now has just a touch of gray in his hair at the temples, and his mother, 49, wears eyeglasses most of the time these days.

But if he should ever find his way back to the driveway, he would see a big display of white lights on the garage door. It reads, "Jacob's Hope."

The family would never consider moving, since they need to be there when Jacob comes home. And they would not change the telephone number, despite some of the crank calls, because that's the number that Jacob knows.

"Kids do come home," Ms. Wetterling said. "And they do heal."

Just a few months ago, the mother sat down to write a letter to Jacob's abductor, an appeal she intended to touch "that shred of compassion" his mother hopes exists in every human being.

"To the man who took Jacob," began the letter, which was printed in some Minnesota newspapers. She reminded the abductor that he, like Jacob, had once been an 11-year-old boy, and that something very wrong must have happened to him.

"For my own survival, I have had to let go of a lot of anger or I would be swallowed up in it," she wrote, asking that he call her and tell her what happened to her son. "You have held the answers for so long."



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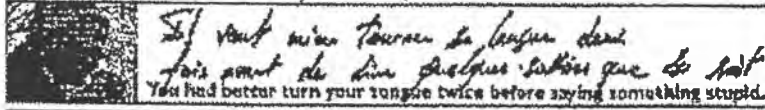
Son Abducted 9 Years Ago, Mother Hangs On to ...

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You also hold the pain. Please talk to me."

The fireplace glowed with red embers, winds whipping across the frozen prairie, as she gazed out the window into the darkness.

"I think the world is about ready for a miracle," she said. "Let it be here."



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C/2224

## Wetterling investigators looking at porn suspect

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Investigators in the 1989 abduction of Jacob Wetterling are taking a look at Shakopee man who was charged this week with possessing child pornography on his computer and who bears some resemblance to a sketch of the man who abducted Wetterling.

"We actually are checking into this person, but it's not because of the similarities in the composite," Stearns County Sheriff Jim Kostreba said Wednesday. "We routinely check into people who are arrested for anything to do with child pornography or child molestation."

Richard Feit, 56, was charged after police found thousands of child pornography images on his workplace computer in Bloomington.

Kostreba said he has seen the photo of Feit and would not say he had a strong resemblance to either of two sketches from the Wetterling abduction.

"The composite isn't really the big thing for us anymore," Kostreba said.

Wetterling was taken at gunpoint by a man on Oct. 22, 1989, near the 11-year-old's St. Joseph home. Two witnesses provided information that helped police compose two sketches of the suspect.

Kostreba said investigators already have begun looking into Feit's background but haven't made any determination about whether he may have been involved in the Wetterling abduction.

He said a woman from Wisconsin called and said the picture of Feit on television Monday night looked like the sketch of the Wetterling abductor.

"Apparently, some people still have these sketches," Kostreba said. "That's good. We don't mind that the case gets this attention."

10372



# Stearns County Sheriff's Office

*John Sanner, Sheriff • Bruce Bechtold, Chief Deputy*

## LAW ENFORCEMENT CENTER

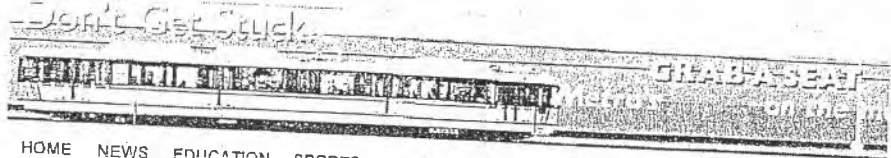
807 Courthouse Square  
P.O. Box 217  
St. Cloud, MN 56302-0217

### STEARNS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE NEWS MEDIA RELEASE February 26, 2004

In October 2003, the Stearns County Sheriff's Office received information that led to the identification of a potential suspect vehicle in the abduction of Jacob Wetterling. The vehicle had remained unidentified for approximately 14 ½ years and the vehicle's potential involvement in the abduction also remained unclear. Since October 2003 continued investigation has led investigators to believe that the vehicle in question, and the driver, were not involved in the abduction. With this new information the investigation has refocused to examine potential local suspects that reside, or did reside, within a reasonable distance of the abduction site and could have accomplished the abduction without a vehicle. This does not completely eliminate the possibility that a vehicle was used although in light of the new information that possibility has diminished. Since October potential suspects that meet the criteria have and continue to be reexamined by investigators from the Stearns County Sheriff's Office working in conjunction with agents from the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and the FBI. All individuals subjected to this refocused scrutiny have been identified for years as potential suspects and have never been satisfactorily cleared.

The immediate advantage of this approach is that the investigative efforts have been channeled and focused on a much smaller group of potential subjects. Working within this group of suspects investigators have conducted recent interviews, gathered additional evidence and received new information.

This investigation is ongoing and the public is strongly encouraged to call the Jacob Wetterling Foundation at #(320) 363-0470 or the Stearns County Sheriff's Office at #(320) 259-3700 with any information regardless of how trivial it might seem. In most cases, this being no exception, public input is critical. Your information could prove to be the missing puzzle piece needed by investigators to resolve this case and provide closure for the family and community.



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## No evidence links Devlin, other missing children

Task force still chasing leads

Friday, October 12, 2007 10:25 AM CDT

Authorities say they have no evidence that Michael Devlin is linked to any other missing children.

But a task force formed months ago to investigate Devlin's possible connection to other missing child cases will continue to pursue leads.

"We've not been able to come up with anything that ties him to other missing children," said Franklin County Prosecutor Bob Parks. Devlin, 41, of Kirkwood, pleaded guilty this week to 85 state and federal charges of kidnapping, armed criminal action, sexual assault, attempted murder and producing child pornography in the abductions of , now 16, of Richwoods, Mo., and , 13, of Beaufort.

While the task force didn't find any evidence of Devlin's involvement in other cases, St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCullough said there's also no evidence he wasn't.

"A guy just doesn't grab two kids and that's all he's done," McCullough said. "I suspect there are other victims."

Devlin's attorneys deny their client has any connection to other missing or abducted child cases.

The task force is made up of investigators from Franklin, Washington, St. Louis and Lincoln counties, the Missouri Highway Patrol, the FBI, and Kirkwood and St. Charles police departments. The group has been looking into possible links between Devlin and other missing child cases in the area and out of state.

Steven Kraft, 12, of Benton Harbor, Mich., vanished from near his home in 2001. Authorities said Devlin had vacationed with his family in that area. Devlin apparently traveled to Michigan in 2001.

In October 1989, Jacob Wetterling, 11, of St. Joseph, Minn., was abducted by an armed man while he was riding his bike with friends.

The task force also looked into other area missing child cases.

Charles "Arin" Henderson, then 11, disappeared in 1991 while riding his bicycle on a rural road near his home in Moscow Mills, Mo., in Lincoln County. Scott Allen Kleeschulte was 9 when he disappeared while riding his bicycle near his home in St. Charles in June 1988.

Authorities said Devlin traveled widely in Lincoln and St. Charles counties.

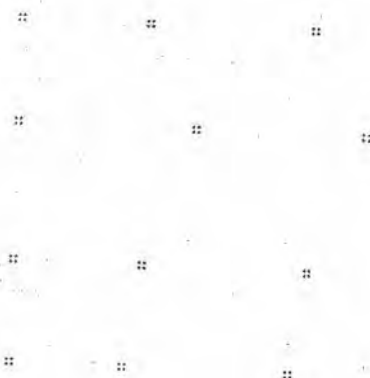


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Other missing child cases the task force investigated in connection with Devlin include that of Dalton Mesarchik, 7, who was kidnapped in March 2003 from the front yard of his home in Streator, Ill. Dalton was found dead the next day on the banks of the Vermillion River.

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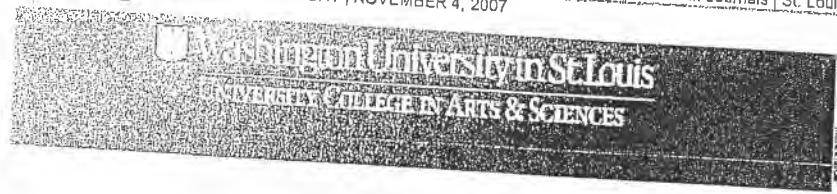
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" When will our law makers wake up and stop listening to the do-gooders of the world. Sex offenders (especially child molesters) NEVER - NEVER recover from their addition. Why then are they being released and allowed to live 1,000+ ft from where kids go to school or play. What. You don't think they are capable of driving a vehicle and snatching a kid 1,001 ft away? Wake up people!!!! Lock them up and throw away the key. "

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## Devlin case ends, but questions linger

By Todd C. Frankel — ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

10/14/2007

Michael J. Devlin is gone, off to prison, guilty pleas secured, life sentences stacked high enough to blot out the sky, trials avoided, his two young victims not forced to testify.

And yet ...

And yet something is missing. The past week's resolutions feel incomplete. The notion that everything is known, absent.

This is not unusual in serial predator cases, said Bill Hagmaier, former head of the FBI's National Center for the Analysis for Violent Crime, where the agency's famed criminal profilers work.



"There is always more to the story," said

Hagmaier, who sent birthday and Christmas cards to notorious serial killer Ted Bundy for years after Bundy's imprisonment in hopes of drawing out new understandings and clues.

In Devlin's case, there may never be answers to some basic questions — Why did he do it? Can anything be learned? Were there other victims? Devlin's attorneys have said their client will not talk again with investigators.

Some of these questions stem from an intense interest that has built since the case burst into public view with the dramatic discovery of Devlin's two young victims at a Kirkwood apartment in January.

The public has this sense that "if we follow a crime, we should be allowed to understand why it happened," said David Finkelhor, a sociologist at the University of New Hampshire's Crimes against Children Research Center.

But that is unrealistic, Finkelhor said. The justice system has other goals: securing a verdict and protecting the young victims. In four court hearings over three days last week, Devlin pleaded guilty to dozens of state and federal charges of kidnapping and sexual abuse.

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St. Louis County prosecutor Robert McCulloch, who filed the bulk of Devlin's charges, said he understands some people might be troubled by never learning why Devlin committed his crimes. He doubts the answer

"Good luck finding someone who can explain how this guy is wired," McCulloch said. "That question will never be answered by anybody."

But the question persists for Mike Prosperi, who owns the Imo's Pizza shop where Devlin worked for years.

"The only question I would have is, 'Why? Why?'" Prosperi said.

He added: "What would have made him act that way? We have no answers. We're as shocked today as we were the day he was arrested."

Experts say Devlin appears to fit the psychological profile of "a grabber" — a child molester who uses force to abduct children. Almost all grabbers are unmarried men. They are socially

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isolated, misfits, outcasts unable to establish normal adult relationships.

Devlin also appears to fit the profile of "a groomer" — someone who befriends a child and then moves on to sex acts. A typical groomer fits well into society, may even be considered a pillar of the community, and exploits children through kindness and attention.

"But these two things are not as separate and distinct as we want to believe," said Ken Lanning, a former FBI agent considered a leading authority in child sex-crime cases.

Lanning thinks Devlin changed over time. He moved from using violence to acting as a coercing friend and father figure to control his first captor, who was taken

Devlin told the FBI in an interview shortly after his arrest that he planned to kill about one month after taking him in 2002. He tried to strangle , but the panicked and crying how begged for his life. "Devlin stated that they were both crying," the report noted. Devlin and reached an agreement: would forget the incident and be satisfied with being alive.

The question of whether Devlin had other victims remains unsolved.

Devlin told the FBI that while he thought about sex with boys all his life, "he did not act on it until he was 36 years old" when he took the report stated.

But experts doubt that claim.

"It's not impossible that this was all there was," Finkelhor of the University of New Hampshire said. "But I bet a lot of money that there was something else."

"I doubt this was his first time," said clinical psychologist Juliet Francis, a consultant with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

Authorities created a task force to explore links between Devlin and six missing child cases, including four in the St. Louis area. One case was the disappearance of Arlin Henderson, who vanished in 1991 in Lincoln County. But no links have been established in any of the cases.

Arlin's uncle, Jim McWilliams, said the family has not given up on the possibility that Devlin was involved.

"If he did do this, maybe after being sentenced, he'll come clean: Maybe he'll open up a door where he can clear up a lot of questions," McWilliams said.

Ethan Corlija, one of Devlin's attorneys, said he is almost certain his client is blameless in the other missing-kid cases. "If I had to put a percentage on it, I'd say 99.9 percent," Corlija said.

No one else has claimed Devlin abused him, the FBI said. But the FBI still wants to talk to Devlin, despite his attorneys insistence he will not.

The search for clues in Devlin's personal history also have proven fruitless.

The FBI report notes Devlin was adopted as a baby into a Webster Groves family of three brothers and two sisters. But there is no hint of anything sinister in his upbringing.

But the experts believe there should be some childhood incident that would lay the framework for his later behavior.

"My sense about him is that we're talking about someone who had a damaged psycho-sexual development," Finkelhor said.

Even if there is nothing traumatic, such information would help to compile a profile "to better classify him," said Francis, the psychologist.

And while Devlin may be unwilling to talk now, that could change, Lanning said.

In his work with the FBI, Lanning saw other high-profile criminals open up with time. It may be six months, a year or five years down the road, but maybe Devlin will want to talk.

"I think it is worth attempting to know what makes a Devlin," Lanning said.

So the questions linger.

Elizabeth Holland, Jeremy Kohler, Tim O'Neil and Jessica Bock of the Post-Dispatch contributed.

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# Newsleaders

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St. Joseph native says running makes him better trumpet player

by Ralph Bell

Thursday, June 5, 2008 2:35 PM EDT

When 52-year-old Dan Rassier was running in the Lake Wobegon Trail Marathon May 10, a thought crossed his mind he hadn't contemplated in decades.

Rassier, a life-long resident of St. Joseph, remembers swimming in Avon as a kid, watching trains as they passed nearby, wondering where they were off to.

Fast forward some 40 years later and here he was, running a 26.2-mile race on the trackless stretch of soil that used to catch his eye from the beach area.

This coincidence of coincidences made fine food for thought - just what he needed to keep a "positive bubble" around him, a bubble Rassier purposely creates for protection during his long-distance runs.

"From running, I've learned so much about myself," he said. "You learn about your body, but you also learn how you think. Because when you're running such long distances your negative imagination can do tricks on you.

"Today I was feeling that second wind you hear runners talk about," he said. "And then I hit mile 24 and it disappeared. I was a dead man, just dead in my tracks. You start dragging your feet. And it's bad for runners to look back to see who's behind you. You want to focus on what's ahead. But as soon as I look back, then I know I'm in trouble.

"So you invent things to pass a little bit of the time," Rassier said. "You kind of drift off into another world."

"Like today, during the last two miles," he said. "I was running a good race and then I started losing it, losing the energy. And you learn how to control what you're thinking, to keep it going and not stop. You learn a lot about how you deal with adversity."

You also learn a lot about how to deal with pain.

"They call this (Wobegon Trail) a trail marathon," Rassier said. "But it's so tame you can't really get hurt on it.

"A 'trail' marathon is like running on the Superior Hiking Trail," he said. "Now that's where you can get hurt. There's rocks and tree roots to deal with there.

"I took a tree out on that trail," he said. "I was running and there were two guys behind me. And you're watching every step.

But there was grass kind of peeking over the rocks, and I caught a rock. I was going down a hill, and all I could do was grab onto a tree while I was airborne. It was a rotten Birch tree, and I took the middle section out of it. But it prevented me from falling on my back. I landed on my feet and the tree came down on me.

"The runners behind me said, 'Are you all right?' And I said, 'Is my back all cut up?' And they said, 'No, it's all right.' So I kept going."

The 30-year Cold Spring elementary band instructor said he would have crawled across the finish line if he

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had to.

"But that race was the hardest one to finish because I was hurting so bad from falling," Rassier said. "You have to lift your feet up when you're running a marathon like that, and I didn't. I fell like eight or nine times."

Give the man credit, though. Despite the exhaustion and pain he's learned to fight through, the Apollo High School and St. Cloud State graduate keeps running and running and running.

"The last three years I've done over 20 races from March through November," Rassier said. "I've run in something like 21 to 22 states now."

The two boxes of running medals he stores are visual reminders of this bachelor's desire to keep pushing himself as the years pass by, rotten conditions or not.

I ran a marathon not too long ago in a blizzard up in Brainerd," Rassier said. "It was a blizzard, I'm telling you. And I remember at mile five or six saying, 'This might be one I'm not going to finish. I'm going to die, running on this slippery stuff.' And then all of a sudden you start realizing, 'Hey, I'm feeling pretty good.' And you pass a runner or two. And you go, 'Wow! Hey! Maybe I'll win!'"

Rassier, arguably one of the best trumpet players in central Minnesota, said he caught the running bug while attending graduate school at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

"I remember running with other trumpet players," he said. "The players that were really good said, 'Hey, you wanna go for a run?' And I can remember running with them and thinking, 'Wow, this is interesting.' Because I would kind of run, but it was usually on the farm, running around doing stuff."

"I'd like to say I became a runner because I wanted to be healthy," he said. "But it really does help my trumpet playing. Like today, (during the Lake Wobegon Trail Marathon) when I was pumping air - it definitely has helped my support. I'm a trumpet player and I'm getting old now. But I can play better than I've ever played, because of that, I think."

After completing his post graduate education in Illinois in '78, Rassier, a music major (affectionately called "Mr. Bee Bop" by students throughout his career) applied for jobs all over the country.

"And wouldn't you know, I ended up getting a job in Cold Spring," he said. "Bingo!"

Rassier says residing here for all but two collegiate years of his life, says it all.

"I've traveled a lot," he said. "And with all the traveling I've done it's made me appreciate where we live. I know we've got it really nice, right here in central Minnesota."

Dan Rassier was St. Joseph's only entrant participating in the first annual Lake Wobegon Trail Marathon. Out of the 80 runners who ran the race, he took 14th place, with a time of 3:39:33. Only one other runner older than himself (age 53) placed higher.

"I'm always trying my best," he said. "And I always finish my races, one way or another. I'll probably be running for the rest of my life."

m/24

Published April 20 2009

## Returning home

**Aaron Larson returns to Slayton after year in Iraq**

SLAYTON – After spending a year defending his country, Staff Sgt. Aaron Larson is home from Iraq and able to hold his little boy close – something that means a lot to a man who suffered the loss of his boyhood friend, Jacob Wetterling, when he was just 11 years old.

By: Justine Wettschreck, Worthington Daily Globe



U.S. Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Aaron Larson arrived home in Slayton on Friday after a year in Iraq. He is pictured here with his fiancée Jackie Tentinger and 2-year-old son Anikan. (Justine Wettschreck/Daily Globe)

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SLAYTON – After spending a year defending his country, Staff Sgt. Aaron Larson is home from Iraq and able to hold his little boy close – something that means a lot to a man who suffered the loss of his boyhood friend, Jacob Wetterling, when he was just 11 years old.

Larson came home to Slayton on Friday morning and was greeted with flags, balloons and family. Saturday morning, he sat in his living room and talked about his son, his time in Iraq, and the event that altered his life.

"He has changed a lot," Larson said, watching his 2-year-old son Anikan scamper through the living room with mom in pursuit. "I came home in November for his birthday, but he has changed even since then."

Larson, a member of the U.S. Army Reserves, served as a Technical Engineer Specialist with the Third Expedition Sustainment Command (ESC) at the joint base in Balad, where he worked to make sure the 17,000 military men and women had what they needed to complete their missions. Larson's job was to review construction projects over \$250,000, but he was also able to work with local Iraqi people on smaller projects.

"I liked meeting the people, and getting a feel for their lifestyle," he stated. "It was interesting to ask them questions. We talked about how their lives have changed in the last few years, and I heard from them about how things are improving."

At an old Iraqi Air Force base just 60 kilometers north of Baghdad, Larson met local people who were grateful for the presence of the U.S. Military personnel – who said infrastructure has improved and jobs are becoming available. Meeting people who are happy about the U.S.'s involvement was a good feeling for

Larson, who said he could understand how being military personnel in areas where their presence was resented must be frustrating, especially for men and women who would rather be home with their families.

"You want to go over and accomplish so many things," Larson said in a wistful way. "There is so much you can see that needs doing."

The hardest part about being away was the separation from his son and his fiancée Jackie Tentinger, who has had a long year of being Anikan's only parent.

"It's a big, huge sigh of relief," Tentinger said of having Larson home. "It has been a year of me and Anikan, and now I can say, 'OK, your turn.' And it is so nice to hear Anikan say, 'Daddy.'"

"But I've missed out on so many little things," Larson commented. "Things I'm never going to get back."

Unlike some military deployments, Larson was able to communicate on a regular basis with family and friends via email and phone, which helped make his time away easier to bear.

"Some of the guys called home daily," he explained. "I talked to Jackie every couple of days and could email almost 24/7, because I was on a computer every day."

When he was called to active duty a year ago, he was given nine days of advance warning of his deployment, which caused wedding plans to be left by the wayside.

"Our wedding was planned for Sept. 9," Larson said. "But obviously the Army isn't going to plan around my schedule. We'll work on setting a new date now."

Born in Murray County, Larson moved with his family when he was 4 or 5 years old, he said. The family settled in St. Joseph, and he became best friends with Jacob Wetterling. Larson was 11 when he, Jacob and Jacob's 10-year-old brother Trevor rode their bikes to a convenience store to rent a video. On that Sunday, Oct. 22, 1989, a masked man approached with a gun and ordered all three to throw their bikes into a ditch and lay down on the ground.

He asked each boy his age. Trevor and Larson, one at a time, were told to run toward a nearby wooded area and not look back or else he would shoot them. They ran, but they looked back to see the man grab Jacob and drag him away.

Now 31 years old and with a child of his own, Larson wonders if he will be too overprotective as a parent, and understands how difficult it must have been for his mother to not hold on too tight after Jacob's abduction.

"What happened changed who I was," he admitted. "That one night changed the course of my life."

When Larson and Trevor ran home that night and reported what had happened, cars began to arrive. The Wetterling house was packed with people, he said – authorities, family, media.

"There were police cars everywhere, and every time someone pulled up I would run to the window and look," Larson said. "I'd expect to see Jacob getting out of the car because he had been found or returned."



A friend of the families called the media immediately, which Larson said was a good thing.

"He knew to get the media involved right away," Larson said. "Before, it could take days to get the word out."

Larson remembers returning to school the following Tuesday, but not staying for the whole day.

"Everybody looked at me, like they were kind of in awe," he recalled. "I remember getting walked out of the school by a police officer, but I'm not sure why. Maybe for protection or something?"

For the next two weeks, Larson was at the Wetterling house every day, where he said it felt good to be around people that understood what he was going through.

"Other people didn't say much to me. I think it was awkward for them," Larson said. "I was an 11-year old boy, and not very emotional."

Trying to get back to any kind of normalcy was not much of an option, because the person he played sports with, hung out with and spent so much time with gone.

"Normalcy was what I did with that one person," Larson explained. "He wasn't there."

The uncertainty was difficult, and the experience left him "a little more guarded," he explained, adding, "I lost my best friend."

"When it first happened, I was assured he'd be back," he said. "It wasn't 'if' Jacob came back, it was 'when.' You never really lose hope. It's good that they are still looking, because people need resolution."

In 2002, Larson moved back to Murray County. In the summer of 2003, he joined the U.S. Army Reserves. He liked the idea of the new experiences the reserves might bring.

"At the time, I was kind of teeter-tottering, and didn't know which way to go," he stated. "I'm a competitive person and always up for a new challenge, and I thought I could also learn new skills."

His mom was surprised to hear he had joined up, but Larson said she is definitely proud of her son.

"I'm glad I did it," Larson admitted. "I have met a lot of great people."

Still, he is glad to be home and planning to spend some time with friends and family before heading back to his job as a special lines claims adjuster with Progressive. He has been in touch with the company throughout his year away, but no specific date has been set as of yet for his return to work.

"Right now I just want to go to the lake and play and hang out," he said, cuddling a wiggly Anikan close before setting him free to run. "While I was gone, Jackie would ask Anikan 'Where's Daddy?' and he would point to a picture, even when I came home for his birthday and was sitting right there. Now he points to me."

"Now that Daddy is home, Anikan doesn't want to let him out of his site," Tentinger interjected, smiling at her two men, back together again.

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## Jacob Wetterling: A Break in 20-Year-Old Missing Boy Case?

Wetterling Was 11 When Abducted at Gunpoint 20 Years Ago

By BRIAN BRAIKER

June 30, 2010 —

Investigators combed over a St. Joseph, Minnesota, property today near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989.

Neighbors reported seeing several unmarked law enforcement vehicles there earlier today, and video footage shot by a ABC News St. Paul affiliate KSTP-TV showed as many as 17 vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and trailers on the grounds.

Officials from the Stearns County Sheriff's Office told KSTP-TV and other local media that no details about the operation could be released because of a court order.

FBI spokesman E.K. Wilson told The Associated Press that the FBI is assisting in search warrant operations in the area.

Investigators seemed to be focusing on what appeared to be furniture and barrels taken from a building on the property, the station reported.

Jacob was abducted on Oct. 22, 1989, as he, his brother Trevor and a friend were returning home on their bicycles from picking up a video. It was the first time Jacob had been out alone at night on his bike.

On the return home, according to the other boys, a masked gunman stopped all three -- and then drove off with Jacob.

All that remained of him on the gravel road was a spot where Jacob's footprints seemed to show resistance. And then nothing.

Over the past two decades, Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, has sustained herself with hope.

"We hope for Jacob, for all of our grandkids, for every child who's home safe today and every child who's missing," she said in an interview with "Nightline" last October on the 20th anniversary of the boy's disappearance.

Wetterling and her husband, Jerry, their three other children, and three grandchildren gathered at their rural St. Joseph home in the lead-up to the anniversary to honor Jacob.

Over the years, his mother has found her voice, and her mission: to find Jacob and help protect other children.

"A lot of people ask, 'How do you do it?' How could I not?" she said. "Every parent knows, you would do anything for your children, and our anything [has] got to be a little more than we ever would have dreamed, but you continue. We'll do anything that we can to find him."

## Jacob Wetterling's Family Holds on to Hope 20 Years Later

Wetterling has started a foundation in Jacob's name. And 15 years ago she helped pass a bill that requires states to implement sex offender registries. She works closely with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, which attempts to track the approximately 100 children a year who according to Justice Department estimates are abducted by strangers.

Ernie Allen, head of the center, says that the chance of finding missing kids diminishes with time, but that hope must not. Children do come back, he said.

In one of the most remarkable cases of its kind, Jaycee Dugard was reunited with her family after 18 years of captivity.

### 'I Think About Him Every Day'

"When Jaycee was found, it was just this exclamation point to our statement," Wetterling said. "There are missing kids out there, it's our job to find them and she did it. She survived some really horrible things and she did it."

Jaycee was on the cover of People magazine, her smile amazingly similar to her smile as a child.

"She is beautiful and she looks so deep-down happy and that's a great starting point," Wetterling said. "And no matter what happened in between, nobody could take away those first 11 years and she drew energy from that, that unconditional love."

As for Wetterling's son Jacob, there are fewer leads each year. But the Wetterlings hang on. Since Jacob vanished they have not changed their phone number, or moved, in case he tries to contact them.

What gives her the ability to keep going and keep hoping?

"How can I not?" she said. "As a searching parent, you just never give up on your child, ever."

*The Associated Press contributed to this report.*

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## Investigators search site near Wetterling abduction

by Madeleine Baran, Minnesota Public Radio

June 30, 2010

St. Paul, Minn. — A large contingent of law enforcement officials unexpectedly returned to the scene of one of Minnesota's most notorious child kidnappings Wednesday, but remained silent about the status of the case or the reason for their latest search.

FBI agents, sheriff's officials, and the state's Bureau of Criminal Apprehension arrived at the St. Joseph, Minn. property with a sealed search warrant. The property is near the site where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989.

FBI Special Agent E.K. Wilson confirmed that FBI agents are assisting with the search, but declined to say whether it was related to the unsolved kidnapping.

Aerial photos taken by the St. Cloud Times show as many as 17 vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and trailers on the site Wednesday afternoon.

A few vehicles have left, but two sheriff's cars remained parked in the driveway. Officials said they don't know when the search will end.

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother, said she learned of the search Wednesday morning.

"I don't honestly think there's any break in this case," she said. "This is just what you do. You have a cold case. You go back to the beginning over and over. And I think there's some other people way back at the beginning that they're also going to be checking out."



Patty Wetterling,  
Jerry Wetterling

Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint on Oct. 22, 1989 near the entry to the property's driveway. He was biking home with his brother and a friend when a masked man with a gun stopped them and told them to get off their bikes and lie face down in a ditch.

After telling the man how old they were, 10-year-old Trevor Wetterling and 11-year-old Aaron Larson were told to run away. They never saw Jacob again.

The Stearns County website lists the property's owners as Robert and Rita Rassier. A woman answered the phone at the property this afternoon, but immediately hung up.

Another family member, Daniel Rassier, is listed at the same address and serves as the St. Joseph treasurer, according to the county's website.

Wetterling said the Rassiers lived on the property at the time of the kidnapping and have farmed the land for decades.

"They're wonderful people," she said. "It's got to be really painful for them as well."

Stearns County Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold declined to say why law enforcement officials are at the property.

"We're conducting an investigation and the details of that investigation are restricted by a court order and we cannot discuss it," he said.

Bechtold said he has "no idea how long" investigators will remain on the property. He said it's possible that the investigation could continue tomorrow. Wilson also confirmed that the investigation is ongoing.

Patty Wetterling said she's thankful that law enforcement officials continue to search for her son, who would be 32 years old this year.

"This is just an ongoing painful thing for a lot of people," she said, "And we need to know one way or another."

## **Wetterling Investigation Shakes Community**

Updated: Wednesday, 30 Jun 2010, 9:45 PM CDT  
Published : Wednesday, 30 Jun 2010, 9:45 PM CDT

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. - It has been over 20 years since Jacob Wetterling went missing from his town, St. Joseph. The community is hoping that one of the leads will close the wounds for good.

Over the years, there have been numerous leads in the Wetterling case, but residents have never forgotten what happened.

"We thought it was in the past and it was unfortunate," said St. Joseph resident Chris Jacobsen. "We didn't know a whole lot about it - then it resurfaced and brings up some questions.

On Wednesday, investigators began to search the abduction site, where Wetterling was kidnapped in October of 1989. Investigators are not saying what they are searching for, but Wetterling's father, Jerry, believes authorities want to start from the beginning of the case.

"It is all just so overwhelming," said Jerry Wetterling.

## **Investigators at Jacob Wetterling Abduction Site in St. Joseph, MN**

Updated: Wednesday, 30 Jun 2010, 10:00 PM CDT  
Published : Wednesday, 30 Jun 2010, 4:11 PM CDT

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. - Jacob Wetterling was abducted nearly 21 years ago. Wednesday, investigators converged at a property near the 1989 abduction site in one of the more active days of the investigation and search since Wetterling's disappearance.

Investigators have been at the home on the 29000 block of 91st Avenue in St. Joseph since 8:15 a.m. Wednesday. FBI spokesman E.K. Wilson says the FBI is assisting in search warrant operations in the area.

"We are conducting an investigation in the St. Joseph area," Stearns County Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold told FOX 9. "Details of the investigation are restricted by a court order. We can not comment on anything further."

Robert Rassier, who owns the property with his wife, told the St. Cloud Times investigators were at his home, but said he didn't want to discuss the situation further. Aerial photographs taken by the newspaper show as many as 17 vehicles, ATVs and trailers on the St. Joseph property.

Patty Wetterling told FOX 9's Maury Glover the Rossiers are "wonderful people." She said Wednesday's activities at the Rassier home may be related to a family member who was investigated early on, but said she thinks Robert and Rita were in Europe at the time of Jacob's disappearance.

Wetterling said she is glad investigators are going back to square one and glad people still care.

On October 22nd, 1989, 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was riding his bike near his home in St. Joseph. Jacob, his younger brother Trevor, and best friend Aaron rented a movie and bought candy at the Tom Thumb store. On their way home they were confronted by a man with a gun. He told the boys to lie in the ditch. One-by-one he told them to run into the woods. When Trevor and Aaron looked back, Jacob and the man were gone.

<http://www.myfoxtwincities.com/dpp/news/minnesota/jacob-wetterling-abduction-site-search-june-30-2010>

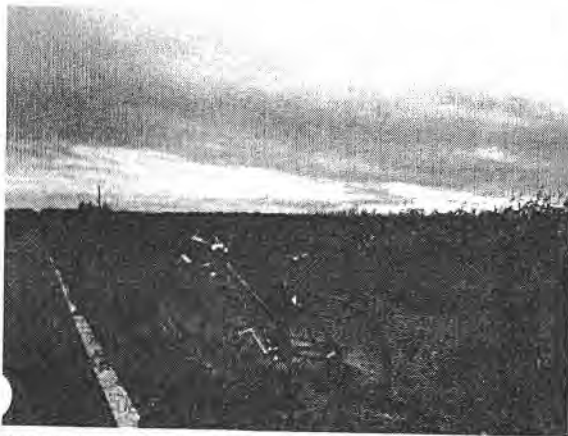
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## Law enforcement converge on site near Wetterling abduction in St. Joseph

By Tad Vezner, Rubén Rosario, Frederick Melo and Mara H. Gottfried  
Pioneer Press

Updated: 06/30/2010 09:30:17 PM CDT



Jacob Wetterling was riding home on his mom's Raleigh 10-speed bike home with his brother and friend when he was kidnapped along the west side of 16th Avenue SE (then 91st Avenue South), about a quarter mile from his St. Joseph home, on October 22, 1989. The bicycle was photographed at the abduction site in St. Joseph on Sunday, October 18, 2009. (Pioneer Press: Richard Marshall, FILE)

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. — A man who lives at the farm where law enforcement with earth-moving equipment converged Wednesday gave a DNA sample to investigators several years ago as part of the Jacob Wetterling abduction case, according to

the man's brother.

Wednesday was the third time authorities searched the farm, said Daniel A. Rassier's brother, who wouldn't give his own name.

Neighbors reported seeing several unmarked law enforcement vehicles Wednesday morning on the property. Aerial photos taken revealed as many as 17 vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and trailers.

Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold of the Stearns County Sheriff's Department said he was restricted by court order from commenting on the investigation. The order, he said, was issued by a Stearns County judge on Tuesday or Wednesday.

"All I can tell you is we're conducting an investigation in the St. Joseph area, and the details of that investigation are restricted by a court order," Bechtold said.

The FBI is "supporting search warrant operations in that area," said E.K. Wilson, FBI spokesman. He said he expected the FBI's support of operations to continue Thursday.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children had "some people on the ground" in St. Joseph on Wednesday, "working in support of the sheriff and the FBI," said Bob Lowery, executive director of the center's missing children division. He said the center has had people "in and out of St. Joseph regularly over the last many

years."

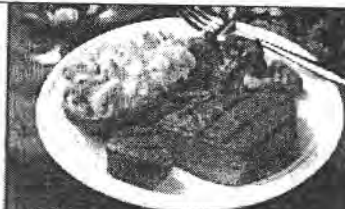
"We're always encouraged by any new leads, but we don't want to provide false hopes," Lowery said.

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The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. Rita Rassier hung up when contacted by the Pioneer Press on Wednesday afternoon. Robert Rassier is 85 and Rita Rassier is 81.

Daniel A. Rassier, 54, is the couple's son and lives with his parents, who are retired farmers, said Anna Reischl, the St. Joseph Township clerk. Daniel Rassier, a band teacher, is the St. Joseph Township treasurer, she said.

The man who identified himself as a brother of Daniel Rassier and lives nearby said Daniel Rassier "went through everything, from hypnosis to lie detector tests to DNA." He said Daniel Rassier had given a DNA sample about eight years ago.

The man said his parents are "pretty upset. They've been there their whole life. It really bothers me because it really hurts them." He said police had been to his parents' property in 1989, 2005 and Wednesday.

When his mother called Wednesday, the man said he thought she was joking. "It's the third time; it just won't end. It's getting to the point of harassment."

A 2008 profile of Daniel Rassier in the St. Joseph Newsleaders newspaper, after he had run a marathon, said he'd lived in St. Joseph for all but two years in college. The article, which described him as "arguably one of the best trumpet players in central Minnesota," said he'd been a Cold Spring, Minn., elementary band instructor for 30 years.

Of the search on the Rassiers' property, Reischl said: "It's just kind of unbelievable because that's one of the nicest families. They're very caring people."

Former St. Joseph Police Chief William Lorentz on Wednesday had only positive things to say about Robert Rassier, whom he's known for decades.

"He was very much a hard working farmer at the time, and very much a strong Christian," Lorentz said. "He goes to church, I think, daily."

Jerry Wetterling, Jacob's father, said: "I really don't want to get into any particular suspects or people, because I really don't know what's going on over there. I just know there's lots of activity."

"When I drove to work this morning, there were five or six squad cars on that driveway, and I was extremely surprised."

Jerry Wetterling said previous leads have never panned out.

"There's been leads that have been pursued aggressively for months at a time," he said. "There's been over 30,000 leads in this case. ... I just know when there have been leads in the past, law enforcement will do whatever they think is necessary to pursue that particular lead. We've just been so grateful for all the interest and support, in people helping out and trying to find out what actually happened to Jacob."

"We've kind of learned for survival that we can't get too high or low over any particular leads," he said. "Otherwise, we'd be emotional wrecks."

Jerry Wetterling said he often shares a neighborly wave with Robert Rassier on his way to work in the morning as the elder man picks up the mail at the end of his driveway, but he was less familiar with Daniel Rassier.

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"That's their driveway, where Jacob's last steps were seen," Jerry Wetterling said. "That's the last evidence of Jacob being in the area, was right there. I'm guessing that's why the activity is going on there."

Lorentz, who was St. Joseph's police chief when Jacob was abducted, said he had no knowledge of the latest investigation. He retired from the police department years ago, with the Wetterling abduction still hanging over his head.

"I hope they find something," Lorentz said. "(I was) always looking forward to having a good lead on something, but nothing develops. I just wish them luck."

Lorentz said that over the years, credible leads in the Wetterling abduction have been rare. "Not as often as I'd like them," he said.

Jacob Wetterling was 11 when a masked gunman abducted him on Oct. 22, 1989, near the entry to the driveway of the property.

Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, who was attending a workshop Wednesday at the University of Minnesota about preventing sexual violence, said she'd been notified in the morning about the search.

"When these things happen, it just upsets my stomach," she said Wednesday, referring to the media attention and the search itself.

Lawrence Nichols, an Eagan-based defense attorney who was a childhood neighbor of Patty Wetterling, said the burden of proof necessary to excavate private property was no greater than to do a typical police search of a home or office.

"You just need a search warrant. ... Haven't you ever

seen 'Cops'? They can go in with a sledgehammer. .... The most egregious one I've heard is a case where they knocked out the side of a building with a front-end loader," Nichols said.

"They need probable cause to get a warrant, and probable cause is basically, 'It's likely that fruits, evidence or instrumentality of the crime might be found here,'" he said. "It's the judge's call."

The last development in the case came in January 2009, when news broke about a Milwaukee, Wis., man with a possible link to Jacob's case. Vernon Seitz, who had confessed to killing two children in the 1950s and died in December 2008, was found to have news clippings and photos of young Jacob, along with child pornography and books on cannibalism, in his home.

But Milwaukee police said they found no connection between Seitz and Jacob's abduction or any other child abduction. Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said in January 2009 that his office worked with Milwaukee police and agreed there was no reason to believe Seitz was involved in Jacob's kidnapping.

The fate of Jacob Wetterling, who would now be 32, remains unknown. His is the most notorious missing-child case in Minnesota.

Jacob was with his brother and a friend when he was abducted just a half-mile from his home in St. Joseph, in central Minnesota. The gunman stepped out of the woods and disappeared with Jacob, who has never been heard from since.

Jacob's name has become synonymous with missing and vulnerable children, leading to the formation of the Jacob Wetterling Foundation by his parents, Jerry and Patty Wetterling, in 1990. Patty Wetterling has twice been a congressional candidate, losing to

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epublicans Mark Kennedy in 2004 and Michele Bachmann in 2006.

The foundation, which later became the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center, merged with the National Child Protection Training Center in February and its staff members lead community sex offender notification forums, among other efforts aimed at raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and abduction.

The Wetterlings organized a children's concert last year at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph to mark the 20th anniversary of their son's abduction.

Patty Wetterling last year wrote and published a book, "Jacob's Hope," which she said was aimed at helping her grandchildren understand what happened to their uncle.

Interviewed by the Pioneer Press in October, Patty Wetterling said she remains as dumbfounded as anyone as to how such a crime could take place in small-town America.

"We don't know what happened," Patty Wetterling said. "It's just a whole bunch of 'we don't knows.' There's no such word as 'closure.' Answers. We need answers."

This story contains information from the Associated Press.

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## Jacob Wetterling timeline

Last update: June 30, 2010 - 10:36 PM

**Oct. 22, 1989:** Jacob Wetterling, 11, is abducted by a masked man on a road near his house in rural St. Joseph, Minn., while returning from a Tom Thumb store with his brother, Trevor, 10, and friend Aaron Larson, 11.

**February 1990:** With the help of others, Patty and Jerry Wetterling establish a foundation in their son's name to call attention to child abduction and abuse.

**August 1994:** Patty Wetterling lobbies for a bill that would require states to create registration programs for sex offenders.

**Sept. 13, 1994:** Congress passes the bill that includes the original Jacob Wetterling Sex Offender Registration Act.

**June 1996:** Jacob's class graduates from Apollo High School in St. Cloud.

**October 1998:** Patty Wetterling writes an open letter to Jacob's abductor, asking that he tell her what happened to her son. The letter is published in several newspapers and on the Internet, resulting in several

significant leads. The case remains open.

**Over the years,** investigators have followed up on more than 40,000 leads from Minnesota to Europe. They've talked with psychics, checked sightings of Jacob lookalikes and cleared more than 4,000 suspects.

**Feb. 17, 2010:** 32nd anniversary of Jacob Wetterling's birth.

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0, 2010 10:36 pm US/Central

## Home Searched Near Wetterling Abduction Site

### Patty Wetterling: "Thank God People Still Care."

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (WCCO) — Investigators Wednesday swarmed around a St. Joseph property near the spot where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989.

The Stearns County Sheriff's Office and the FBI were at 29748 91st Avenue in St. Joseph. Investigators confirmed they were conducting a search after getting a warrant.

Neighbors reported seeing several unmarked law enforcement vehicles at the property on Wednesday morning. Aerial video from the WCCO-TV helicopter and still pictures published by the St. Cloud Times showed as many as 17 vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and trailers on the property.

Sources say police brought in cadaver dogs to search the property. If the dogs detect any signs of human remains, officers are prepared to use heavy equipment to dig up the areas.

WCCO-TV anchor Don Shelby talked with Jacob's mother, Patty, early in the evening. She said she had not been warned that the investigation was happening today but she added: "Thank God people still care."

Wetterling also said she had heard that a search had been planned sometime soon.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner told the newspaper that the county attorney's office had advised him that a court order prevented him from saying why investigators were at the residence.

"Because of the court order, I'm not going to answer," questions about the Wetterling case. Sanner told the newspaper, "I do understand that the public is interested in what's going on," Sanner said. "I don't want to do anything at this point to compromise any potential prosecution."

A sheriff's office squad car was parked at the entry to the driveway.

Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint in October 1989 near the entry to the driveway. He was just a half-mile from his home in St. Joseph, in central Minnesota.

The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. They still live there with their adult son, Daniel.

Spokesman E.K. Wilson says the FBI is assisting in search warrant operations in the area. Investigators believe this search could last two days.

Patty Wetterling said the search was something she knew was going to happen, but that it had to be done. She said it needs to be done not only for her family, but for the people who live there with the shadow that hangs over their heads.

Wetterling says she's guarded, but hopeful, about what searchers may find.



1 of 2

Click to enlarge

The Stearns County Sheriff's Office and the FBI were at 29748 91st Avenue in St. Joseph. Investigators confirmed they were conducting a search after getting a warrant. This property is near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989. Sean Skinner/CBS

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## Jacob Wetterling Abduction: A Timeline

St. Joseph, Minn. (WCCO) — Jacob Wetterling has been missing for more than 20 years. Here is a brief timeline of the case.

## - October 22, 1989

11-year-old Jacob Wetterling is abducted from a group of three boys by a masked gunman. Jacob was abducted at gunpoint in 1989 near the family's home in St. Joseph, Minn. He, his elder brother and a friend were on the way home from renting a video at a nearby convenience store.

## - May 2002

Investigators who'd been looking into charges of sexual abuse at St. John's Abbey ask for records of 11 monks at the abbey. Agents never find any connection to the Wetterling abduction.

## - April 2003

Patty Wetterling helps President Bush kick off the national Amber Alert program.

## - September 2004

Police confirm that DNA tests show a man in Warroad, Minn., who looks similar to Jacob is not Wetterling.

## - November 2004

Patty Wetterling launches a campaign for Congress, eventually losing to Mark Kennedy.

## - November 2006

Wetterling runs for U.S. Senate, drops out of that race and then runs for Congress again. She is later defeated in the November election by Michele Bachmann.

## - February 2007

A task force investigating a kidnapping suspect in Missouri looks into any possible connections to the Wetterling case. The search doesn't turn up any solid leads.

## - February 2007

Investigators release an age-projection photo of Jacob Wetterling. It shows how Jacob might look at age 29.

## - May 2007

Jacob's siblings go to Washington D.C. for the unveiling of a book they helped write called "What About Me? Coping With the Abduction of a Brother or Sister."

## - October, 2008

Hoping to solve cases, thousands of Minnesota inmates are being given decks of playing cards. The 52 cards have pictures of unsolved murders, missing persons and unidentified remains cases that occurred in the past 50 years — including the picture of Jacob Wetterling.

## - January 2009

Milwaukee police clear the name of a Vernon Seitz. News reports had said police got a tip that Seitz had confessed to killing two children to a psychiatrist. Seitz died before police could question him about the case and investigators later report they found no connection to Wetterling's abduction.

## - October 2009

As Jacob's parents mark the 20th anniversary of Jacob's death, his mother, Patty, tells WCCO-TV reporter Caroline Lowe that she and her family go through similar emotions every time an anniversary approaches. "For me, every fall, there is this whole body experience of knowing that the abduction time is nearby," said Wetterling. "I just keep scratching my head, like, 'What haven't we done? What else do we need to do to find Jacob and the man who took him and get some answers?' Because we do need answers. I think the entire state of Minnesota needs answers."

## - December 2009

A group of Vietnam veterans make their last three-day walk from Anoka to the St. Joseph home of Jerry and Patty Wetterling. The veterans walked for years in hopes of raising awareness about Jacob's case. They started the 60-mile walk when the couple's son Jacob Wetterling went missing 20 years ago.

## - February 2010

The foundation created in honor of a Wetterling teams up with another nonprofit. The Jacob Wetterling Foundation announces a merger with the National Child Protection Training Center.

## - June 2010

Investigators swarm a property near the spot where Jacob Wetterling was abducted more than 20 years ago.

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Jacob Wetterling was abducted near St. Joseph, Minn., in 1989  
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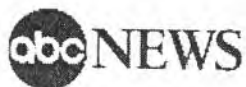
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## Mother of Boy Missing Since 1989 'Hopeful' New Search Will Yield Results

Investigators Searching and Digging Up the Farm Where Jacob Wetterling Was Last Seen

By JOHN WETENHALL

July 1, 2010—

Patty Wetterling has never given up hope that one day the mystery of her son's disappearance in 1989 would be solved.

She may have a reason for new hope as law enforcement officials dug today at the farm near St. Joseph, Minn., where Jacob, who was 11 at the time, was last seen.

"I'm hopeful that they'll find something," Wetterling told ABCNews.com. "We're keeping our fingers crossed, saying a little prayer here and there."

Even after 21 years, Wetterling is cautiously optimistic about the search.

"It's hard," she said. "It's very confusing, what to feel, what to think, what to do."

Police have refused to say whether the focus on the farm is connected to Jacob Wetterling's disappearance, and won't even discuss the issue with the boy's mother.

"They can't tell me," Patty Wetterling said today. "I do believe it's connected."

The mom said the connection to Jacob's disappearance is impossible to ignore.

"It would be a stretch to think they were doing this massive search for any other reason," she said.

She praised law enforcement officials for their continued attention to a search that she has never given up on. "What it shows to me is the absolute commitment of law enforcement to never quit," Wetterling said.

Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold of the Stearns County Sheriff's Department said a court order prevents him from discussing the details of the investigation.

"We're conducting an investigation," he told ABCNews.com. "We have people there again today."

Ernie Allen, head of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, confirmed that the Stearns County Sheriff's office, the FBI, and members of his organization's 'Team Adam' were all at the farm. Team Adam is made up of retired law enforcement officials who specialize in finding missing children. Like Bechtold, Allen said he could not comment on the reason for the new activity, instead focusing on the ongoing nature of the investigation.

"This is a continuation of an investigative angle that law enforcement has been pursuing for some time," Allen told ABCNews.com.

"There is clearly a legal basis for a search," Allen said.

## Jacob Wetterling Was Abducted While Bicycling With a Brother and a Friend

The fresh activity on the farm is located a half mile down the road from Wetterling's home. Jacob was taken by a masked man from the driveway of the farm while his brother and a friend watched.

A man who answered a cell phone registered to the property refused to confirm his identity and refused to answer any questions about the renewed activity on the farm.

"I'm not answering any stupid questions," the man told ABCNews.com. "We've been questioned and harassed for 21 years. We're done."

Local ABC News affiliate KSTP reported that up to 17 vehicles were on the property Wednesday and many returned today. A dump truck filled with dirt left the property today and came back empty soon after.

Jacob was abducted on Oct. 22, 1989, as he, his brother Trevor and a friend were returning home on their bicycles from picking up a video. It was the first time Jacob had been out alone at night on his bike.

On the return home, according to the other boys, a masked gunman stopped all three -- and then drove off with Jacob.

All that remained of him on the gravel road was a spot where Jacob's footprints seemed to show resistance. And then nothing.

Over the past two decades, Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, has sustained herself with hope.

"We hope for Jacob, for all of our grandkids, for every child who's home safe today and every child who's missing," she said in an interview with "Nightline" last October on the 20th anniversary of the boy's disappearance.

Over the years, his mother has found her voice, and her mission: to find Jacob and help protect other children.

"A lot of people ask, 'How do you do it?' How could I not?" she said. "Every parent knows, you would do anything for your children, and our anything [has] got to be a little more than we ever would have dreamed, but you continue. We'll do anything that we can to find him."

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# Jacob Wetterling Abduction: Search Underway on Neighbor's Farm

July 1, 2010

By LBG1

Local elementary band teacher caught up in Jacob Wetterling abduction case?



Jacob Wetterling

Since early this morning authorities have been conducting a search on the Stearns County, Minnesota, farm owned by 85-yr-old Robert and 81-yr-old Rita Rassier in connection with the 1989 abduction of 11-yr-old Jacob Wetterling. A farm located near where Jacob was abducted. News reports state living at the farm, the Rassier's son, Daniel A. Rassier, age 54. In an article about the search, Daniel A. Rassier was referred to as a "teacher". During a search on the internet we discovered a 2-yr-old article about a "Dan Rassier", a lifelong resident of St. Joseph and 30-yr band teacher at Cold Spring Elementary School located 14 miles from St. Joseph. The authorities are tight-lipped about the investigation, refusing to release details which led to the search of the Rassier's farm. Whether Daniel A. Rossier is a suspect, a person of interest in the Jacob Wetterling case, or an innocent bystander caught up in the search for clues in the Jacob Wetterling abduction case. And, whether Daniel A. Rossier is "Dan Rossier", the 30-yr elementary band teacher at Cold Spring Elementary, a lifelong resident of St. Joseph, the same age as Daniel A. Rossier.

Jacob was abducted on October 22, 1989, at 9:15 PM, along 91st Ave, less than a 1/2 mile from the Wetterling home. Jacob, his brother Trevor, and a friend had set out on their bikes to pick up a video at a local Tom Thumb convenience store when a masked gunman stopped the boys. According to site, The Charley Project, the boys were approached by a Caucasian male wearing a mask and dark clothing armed with either a shotgun or handgun. The man ordered the boys lie down in a nearby ditch. The man asked Trevor, Jacob's age, then told Trevor to "run away and not look back". The man then "did the same" with the boy who was a friend, leaving Jacob alone with the unidentified man. According to the Charley Project, the man then "walked towards a wooded area" with Jacob.

According to the SCTimes, Jacob was abducted near the driveway of the Rassier farm.

Rm/14

From 12 News:

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said the St. Cloud Times office of district attorney told him that the court order prevented him say why investigators in the residence.

Sheriff's Office squad car parked at the entrance to the road. Property owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. Rita Rassier hung up when contacted by Pioneer Press this afternoon. Robert Rassier is 85 and Rita Rassier 81. Daniel A. Rassier, 54, lists the same address, and St. Joseph Township treasurer, in accordance with the Web site Stearns County.

Anna Reischl St. Joseph Township clerk, said Daniel Rassier is one of the sons of Robert and Rita Rassier and lives in the house with them. A pair of retired farmers and Daniel Rassier is a group of teachers, "she said.

"It's just incredible view, because it is one of the best families," said Reischl search occurs on the property in Rassier. "They are very caring people."

Is Daniel A. Rassier, Dan Rassier, a lifelong resident of St. Joseph and 30-yr band teacher at Cold Spring Elementary located 14 miles from St. Joseph? And, who are the other "brothers"?



Dan Rassier, Cold Spring Elementary Teacher, St. Joseph, Minnesota

On June 5, 2008, the site The Newsleaders published an article on Dan Rassier, age 52, lifelong resident of St. Joseph and 30-year Cold Spring elementary band instructor. The article focused on Dan Rassier's passion for marathon running and playing the trumpet.

When 52-year-old Dan Rassier was running in the Lake Wobegon Trail Marathon May 10, a thought crossed his mind he hadn't contemplated in decades.

Rassier, a life-long resident of St. Joseph, remembers swimming in Avon as a kid, watching trains as they passed nearby, wondering where they were off to.

Fast forward some 40 years later and here he was, running a 26.2-mile race on the trackless stretch of soil that used to catch his eye from the beach area.

This coincidence of coincidences made fine food for thought – just what he needed to keep a "positive bubble" around him, a bubble Rassier purposely creates for protection during his long-distance runs.

"From running, I've learned so much about myself," he said. "You learn about your body, but you also learn how you think. Because when you're running such long distances your negative imagination can do tricks on you.

Rm/15



On July 30, 2004, a man came forward to tell his story of being abducted and sexually molested at age 12 in Cold Spring—ten miles from where Jacob was abducted—on January 13, 1989, ten months before Jacob Wetterling disappeared with his abductor. The man contacted KARE-TV reporter Rick Kupchella. KARE-TV called the man to protect his identity. account of his abduction included walking down the road after hockey practice. A man pulling over in a car then asking for directions. The man stepping out of the car and grabbing , forcing into the car. The man driving to a remote area then sexually assaulting the boy. After the man sexually assaulted , he drove back to town continually questioning whether “recognized” the man. stated the man pulled from the back seat of the car and told him to run.

“And don’t look back or he threatened to shoot,” said. “I did as I was told.”

family immediately contacted the authorities while was taken to a local hospital for tests.

From KARE 11:

The list of similarities is as compelling today as it was back in 1989.

- \* Similar ages. was 12. Jacob was 11.
- \* Similar Suspect Description. A lone, white male with a low, gravelly voice. map showing proximity of towns
- \* The location of the abductions. was taken in Cold Spring, just ten miles from St. Joseph where Jacob disappeared.
- \* In each case, there was a threat of a gun.
- \* The sexual nature of each crime. In case, he was sexually assaulted. In Jacob’s case, authorities confirm there was the suggestion of “sexual interest” in the boys.
- \* A mask. In case, the abductor forced the boy’s cap over his eyes. In Jacob’s case the abductor wore nylon stockings over his head.
- \* Similar commands. was told to “run away and don’t look back or I’ll shoot.” The boys with Jacob were told to “run into the woods and don’t look back or I’ll shoot.”

, at age 12, was a resident of Cold Spring, and, most likely, a student at Cold Spring Elementary. Given these two details, it would seem to indicate 12-yr-old would have recognized Dan Rossier, the long time band teacher at Cold Spring Elementary school if Rossier abducted , as the abductor wasn’t wearing a disguise or a nylon stocking pulled over his face. As of yet, we’ve been unable to discover the identity of Daniel A. Rossier’s “brothers”, the “other sons” of the Rossier family who may have been living at home in 1989.

<http://deathby1000papercuts.com/2010/07/jacob-wetterling-abduction-search-underway-on-neighbors-farm/>

Rm/16



## Jacob Wetterling abduction site focus of search

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. -- Video from Sky 11 shows several vehicles and Stearns County squad cars are at a property near the site where Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989.

Stearns County Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold confirms and investigation is going on but could not comment further because of a court order restricting him to do so.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation is assisting with search operations in the area, said F.B.I. spokesman E.K. Wilson.

Jerry Wetterling, Jacob's father, told KARE 11 he noticed five or six squad cars from Stearns County near the abduction site while driving to work Wednesday morning.

"I was just really surprised," Jerry Wetterling said. "I had no idea there would be large activity going on."

Several unmarked law enforcement vehicles arrived at the St. Joseph property at 8:15 a.m., neighbors told the newspaper.

The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. A woman who picked up the phone at the residence declined to comment when contacted by KARE 11.

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother, told KARE 11 she wasn't surprised to learn authorities were at this location.

"I'm glad they are doing it," Patty Wetterling said. "It is something they have wanted to do."

Wetterling was abducted on Oct. 22, 1989. He was 11 years old. He was abducted near the entry of the driveway to the property where authorities are searching today.

"It is right where it happened, so it makes sense that they would go back to the beginning," Patty Wetterling said.

Investigators initially thought Wetterling was abducted by someone driving a car, but evidence later led investigators to believe the abductor left on foot, which narrowed the scope of their investigation dramatically.

**RELATED:**KARE's May 2004 report on Wetterling case

"That's what seems to have happened the last few years is going right back to the beginning," Jerry Wetterling told KARE 11. "That's where Jacob's last steps were on that driveway there."

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## Search near Wetterling abduction site concludes

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. -- The two-day search near the scene of Jacob Wetterling's abduction has come to an end.

The search concluded Thursday evening, Sheriff John Sanner told the St. Cloud Times. He said this phase of the investigation was complete and no arrests had been made.

Sanner would not comment about what investigators found or were looking for, citing the court order, but said a news release would be issued Friday morning.

Throughout the day, a backhoe and dump truck were excavating at least one site on a farmstead in St. Joseph, Minn.

Video shot from the air showed the backhoe and law enforcement crews digging in a low spot just off an unpaved road that cuts through two farm fields near the home of Robert and Rita Rassier.

The area being excavated appears to be a dump site. Some of the earth being dug up is blackened, suggesting that the site was also used for burning. Piles of what look like old construction materials and other trash sit nearby.

Dump trucks moved the piles of dirt off the property, apparently bringing them to the Stearns County Garage in Waite Park.

On Oct. 22, 1989, Jacob was riding his bicycle with his brother and a friend at dusk, and was just a half-mile from his home when they were approached by a masked gunman. He told the other two boys to run away and Jacob has been missing ever since. There have been no arrests, and authorities have cleared over 40,000 leads over the years.

For those who live in St. Joseph, this week's search opened up an old wound.

"I don't know of anybody here who hasn't been haunted by what happened," said St. Joseph resident Joyce Foster.

Parents were terrified after the abduction.

"That could have been our kid," Foster thought at the time. "I just think about it all the time. It's emotional and touches everyone. He is just a part of you."

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother, was invited to the scene by law enforcement and later shared her thoughts with reporters.

Jacob's mother, was invited to the scene by law enforcement and later shared her thoughts with reporters.

Stearns County investigators, an FBI special agent, K-9 teams, and a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension crime scene truck are also on the scene.

Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtoldt now says that barrels trucked off the Rassier farm last night are used for the local town festival, and are filled with water to hold the tents down. He would not say why the barrels were removed from the farm or what investigators hope to learn from them.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner says he is optimistic the search will be completed by the end of the day on Thursday.

"I wish they would have closure," said St. Joseph resident Sylvester Prom. "I wish either way they would find out what happened. Twenty-one years is a long time to be waiting for an answer."

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## Patty Wetterling: Watching the search

SAINT JOSEPH, Minn. - Patty Wetterling dealt Thursday with a broken fibula and a barrage of questions from reporters about the possible new developments in the 20-year-old abduction case of her son Jacob.

"I talk to Jacob," Wetterling said quietly in front of her Saint Joseph home. "I still believe that we are connected and maybe this will get us closer."

"This" refers to the scene, less than a mile away, where federal and county investigators armed with heavy equipment and dump trucks have been digging into the farmstead closest to the site of 11-year-old Jacob's abduction on Oct. 22, 1989. It is the most intensive search ever conducted on the property.

The farmstead's gravel driveway joins 91st Avenue at the point where a gravel-voiced man confronted Jacob, his brother, Trevor, 10, and friend Aaron Larson, 11, on that dark October evening. The man ordered Trevor and Aaron to run away but kept Jacob. The boy has never been seen since.

However, his mother said she still sees him in her dreams.

"[My husband Jerry and I] found him and he was, ironically, he had hurt his leg or something, so we were pushing him in a wheelchair, trying to escape some bad guy and I had not seen him in all these years and he looked up and --" she paused and threw her head back to catch a tear. "Makes me cry. He said, 'Mom, how did you get so old?'"

Inevitably, she talks about the family that still lives in the farmhouse.

"I've met them," she said. "I don't know them well. I know that there are several children. I have not met them all. The parents are elderly and I think they are active with Saint Joe's church and we are not members of that church. So I don't know them well. They seem to be really nice, salt-of-the-Earth, good people, the parents."

She insists that she does not know exactly why there

is another search of the farm property now, but she welcomes new attention to Jacob's disappearance.

"They do not tell me what they are going to do before they do it," Wetterling said. "They often will tell me a lead came in or they met with an inmate in a prison or something happened after it is over. Clearly, that is what is happened this time."

She tolerates but admits a bit of annoyance at the loud buzz of helicopters over her small neighborhood.

"It does freak out people in the area because we remember [the days of searching after the abduction]," she said quietly. "We do remember those helicopters and those low flying little planes. It brings me right back to the beginning."

Patty Wetterling broke her leg bone just above the ankle two weeks ago. She faces another week in a cast, then several more weeks on crutches. Still, this week, it is a different kind of break she yearns for, some answers to the case that cost her a son's adolescence and adulthood, and prompted her and Jerry to begin a nationwide crusade for child safety, including founding the Jacob Wetterling Foundation.

Their efforts culminated in the 1994 Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Registration of Sex Offenders Act.

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**KSTP.COM — 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS****Investigators On The Scene Of Where Jacob Wetterling Disappeared More Than 20 Years Ago**

Updated: 07/01/2010 6:57 AM KSTP.com By: Cory Kampschroer and Katie Lynn

5 EYEWITNESS NEWS has confirmed Stearns County investigators are at a property in the area where Jacob Wetterling was abducted more than 20 years ago.

Neighbors report seeing several unmarked law enforcement vehicles Wednesday morning at the property in St. Joseph. A sheriff's office squad car is parked at the entry to the driveway.

The sheriff's office tells 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS that, "an investigation is occurring today, but details of that investigation are restricted by a Stearns County court order."

The sheriff's office would not release any other details about the investigation and gave no indication when more details would be released.

But Patty Wetterling tells The Associated Press her son's case is still open, and she believes investigators are going back to the beginning and revisiting everything. She says she doesn't believe there was any major break in the case, but rather, investigators are simply going back to "where it all started."

From CHOPPER 5, we could see investigators focusing on what appeared to be furniture taken from a building on the property.

Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint on October 22, 1989 near the entry to the driveway when he was 11 years old. He was just a half-mile from his home in St. Joseph.

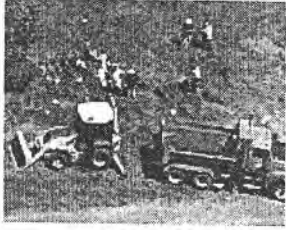
**Stay tuned to KSTP.com and 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS for the latest details.**

*The Associated Press contributed to this article*



**KSTP.COM — 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS****Investigators Done With Search Near Wetterling Abduction Site**

Updated: 07/01/2010 10:43 PM KSTP.com By: Ryan Ruud



Nearly 21 years after the abduction of 10-Year-Old Jacob Wetterling, Investigators say they're done with a two-day search of the Robert and Rita Rassier property. The Rassier property is just yards away from the abduction site.

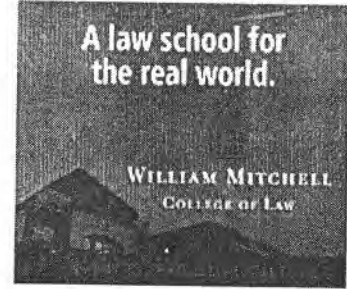
What investigators found, or removed from the property is unknown and investigators are under court order to remain silent.

5 EYEWITNESS NEWS has confirmed that Law Enforcement will issue a written News Release in the morning. That release however will not detail what they found, or what they are looking for but it will describe what's coming next.

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## Investigators continue searching near site of Wetterling abduction

by Madeleine Baran, Minnesota Public Radio,

Ambar Espinoza, Minnesota Public Radio

July 1, 2010

St. Joseph, Minn. — Law enforcement officials were expected to continue searching Thursday at a farm near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted more than 20 years ago, but his mother said she doesn't think the search signals a break in the case.

Several law enforcement vehicles were already parked at the property in St. Joseph early Thursday morning, a day after up to 17 vehicles, ATVs and trailers showed up with a sealed search warrant.

Patty Wetterling said she learned of the search Wednesday morning, but she said the search seemed routine.

"I don't honestly think there's any break in this case," she said. "This is just what you do. You have a cold case. You go back to the beginning over and over. And I think there's some other people way back at the beginning that they're also going to be checking out."

Jacob was last seen near the entrance to the farm's driveway on Oct. 22, 1989. He was biking home with his brother and a friend when a masked man with a gun stopped them and told them to get off their bikes and lie face down in a ditch.

or telling the man how old they were, 10-year-old Trevor Wetterling and 11-year-old Aaron Larson were told to run away. Jacob was never seen again, and his disappearance is one of Minnesota's most well-known cold cases.

FBI agents, Stearns County Sheriff's officials and the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension have all been seen searching the property. Law enforcement officials remained silent about the status of the case or the reason for their latest search.



Patty Wetterling,  
Jerry Wetterling

FBI Special Agent E.K. Wilson confirmed Wednesday that his agency is assisting with the search, but he declined to say whether it was related to the unsolved kidnapping. He said the investigation was ongoing.

Aerial photos taken by the St. Cloud Times showed vehicles parked on the property Wednesday.

The Stearns County website lists the property's owners as Robert and Rita Rassier. A woman answered the phone at the property Wednesday afternoon but immediately hung up.

Another family member, Daniel Rassier, is listed at the same address and serves as the St. Joseph treasurer, according to the county's website.

Wetterling said the Rassiers lived on the property at the time of the kidnapping and have farmed the land for decades.

"They're wonderful people," she said. "It's got to be really painful for them as well."

Stearns County Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold declined to say why law enforcement officials are at the property.

"We're conducting an investigation and the details of that investigation are restricted by a court order and we cannot discuss it," he said. Bechtold said he has "no idea how long" investigators will remain on the property.

Wetterling said she's thankful law enforcement officials continue to search for her son, who would be 32 years old this year.

ais is just an ongoing painful thing for a lot of people," she said, "and we need to know one way or another."

(Espinoza reported from St. Joseph and Baran reported from St. Paul.)

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## Search complete near Wetterling abduction site; no arrests

by Tim Nelson, Minnesota Public Radio

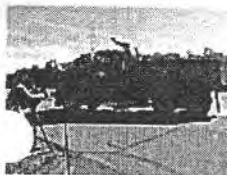
July 1, 2010

St. Joseph, Minn. — Authorities have completed their search at a farm outside St. Joseph in central Minnesota, just yards from where kidnap victim Jacob Wetterling disappeared 21 years ago.

Investigators with the Stearns County Sheriff's Office and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension left the farm of Rita and Robert Rassier shortly after 6 p.m. Thursday, after two days of searching on the farm.

A deputy said the investigation had finished there for now.

Investigators have searched the farm at least twice before, but this time, they brought in a backhoe and hauled away six dump truck loads of dirt, which they took to a county highway maintenance yard.



Dump truck leaves  
Wetterling search  
site

The property abuts the road where Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint in 1989, returning from a trip to the store with his brother and a friend one night. He hasn't been seen since.

The Stearns County website lists the property's owners as Robert and Rita Rassier. Another family member, Daniel Rassier, is listed at the same address and serves as the St. Joseph treasurer, according to the county's website.

Police say they're under a judge's order not to talk about the case, but did say that they were executing a search warrant on the property.

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## Digging With Backhoe, Dump Truck at Jacob Wetterling Abduction Site

Updated: Thursday, 01 Jul 2010, 6:25 PM CDT  
Published : Thursday, 01 Jul 2010, 8:27 AM CDT

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. - Investigators returned to the site of Jacob Wetterling's 1989 abduction on Thursday after spending the bulk of Wednesday searching the St. Joseph, Minnesota property.

Stearns County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Bruce Bechtold said Wednesday a court order restricted him from discussing the investigation. FBI spokesman E.K. Wilson said the FBI was assisting in search warrant operations in the area.

Around 8:30 a.m. Thursday, a backhoe and dump truck drove down the long dirt road toward the farm. Investigators dug at the area for much of the day Thursday, and dirt hauled off the property by dump trucks was taken to taped-off garages at a Stearns County public works facility.

Investigators first arrived at the property of Robert and Rita Rassier, on the 29000 block of 91st Avenue, around 8:15 a.m. Wednesday. Patty Wetterling said Wednesday's activities at the Rassier home may be related to a family member who was investigated early on, but said she thinks Robert and Rita were in Europe at the time of Jacob's disappearance.

"It's both frightening and reaffirming at the same time," said Patty Wetterling. "And the helicopters -- I hear those helicopters and it just brings you right back to the beginning."

Patty and Jerry Wetterling say they are glad investigators are going back to square one and glad people still care.

"That's what we're just looking for, to find out what happened to Jacob, where is Jacob," Jerry Wetterling said. "We're just so grateful that everybody still cares and wants to find out."

On October 22nd, 1989, 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was riding his bike near his home in St. Joseph. Jacob, his younger brother Trevor, and best friend Aaron rented a movie and bought candy at the Tom Thumb store. On their way home they were confronted by a man with a gun. He told the boys to lie in the ditch. One-by-one he told them to run into the woods. When Trevor and Aaron looked back, Jacob and the man were gone.

## First Part of Wetterling Investigation Over

Updated: Thursday, 01 Jul 2010, 9:35 PM CDT  
Published : Thursday, 01 Jul 2010, 9:35 PM CDT

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. - Stearns County Sheriff's Office said Thursday the first part of the investigation into the 1989 abduction of Jacob Wetterling is over.

Officials say no arrests were made.

Around 8:30 a.m. Thursday, a backhoe and dump truck drove down the long dirt road toward the farm. Investigators dug at the area for much of the day Thursday, and dirt hauled off the property by dump trucks was taken to taped-off garages at a Stearns County public works facility.

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Rm/24

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<http://www.myfoxtwincities.com/dpp/news/first-part-of-wetterling-investigation-over-july-1-2010>

## Still Many Questions in Wetterling Investigation

Updated: Thursday, 01 Jul 2010, 10:25 PM CDT  
Published: Thursday, 01 Jul 2010, 6:25 PM CDT

The investigation lead into the abduction of Jacob Wetterling in 1989 is leaving everyone with a lot of questions.

**VIDEO (left)** *Nationally-known criminal profiler, Pat Brown explains why investigators are not releasing any information.*

### **Why do investigators return to the scene of a crime nearly 20 years later?**

"There are new technologies that can detect bodies," said Brown.

Brown believes the FBI is using sophisticated radar to search the farmstead. And it may have a lot to do with the son of the elderly couple who own the land.

Detectives aren't calling him a suspect, but are curious about strange statements he's made, including one to FOX 9 investigators.

"When your doing statement analysis, confessing to crimes in parts of this."

On October 22nd, 1989, 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was riding his bike near his home in St. Joseph. Jacob, his younger brother Trevor, and best friend Aaron rented a movie and bought candy at the Tom Thumb store. On their way home they were confronted by a man with a gun. He told the boys to lie in the ditch. One-by-one he told them to run into the woods. When Trevor and Aaron looked back, Jacob and the man were gone.

<http://www.myfoxtwincities.com/dpp/news/still-many-questions-in-wetterling-investigation-july-1-2010>

Rm/25



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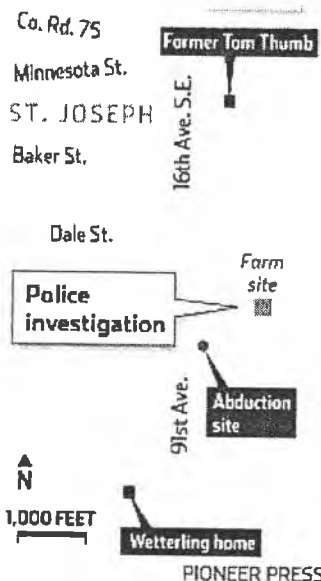
## Cops mum on Wetterling site search

By Tad Vezner, Rubén Rosario, Frederick Melo and Mara H. Gottfried

Updated: 07/01/2010 07:36:22 AM CDT

### So close to home

Jacob Wetterling was abducted near the Rassier farm while biking home from a Tom Thumb convenience store in 1989. The farm was searched Wednesday.



Pioneer Press

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. — For the third time since the abduction of young Jacob Wetterling more than 20 years ago, authorities converged on a family farm near the site of the boy's disappearance.

Neighbors reported seeing several unmarked law

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enforcement vehicles Wednesday morning on the property. Aerial photos showed as many as 17 vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and trailers. Earth-moving equipment was also reported.

Daniel A. Rassier, 54, who lives with his parents at the farm, has previously submitted DNA and undergone hypnosis as well as a lie-detector test in connection to the Wetterling investigation, said Rassier's brother.

Stearns County sheriff's Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold said he could not comment on the case.

"All I can tell you is we're conducting an investigation in the St. Joseph area, and the details of that investigation are restricted by a court order," Bechtold said.

The order, he said, was issued by a Stearns County judge Tuesday or Wednesday. No arrests have been made in the case.

The FBI was taking part in the investigation, said FBI spokesman E.K. Wilson.

Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, who was attending a workshop on preventing sexual violence Wednesday at the University of Minnesota, said she had been notified in the morning about the search.

"When these things happen, it just upsets my stomach," she said, referring to the media attention and the search itself.

The property is owned by Robert

and Rita Rassier. Rita Rassier hung up the phone when called by the Pioneer Press on Wednesday afternoon. She is 81; Robert Rassier is 85.

Daniel Rassier is the couple's son and lives with his parents, said Anna Reischl, the St. Joseph Township clerk. Daniel Rassier is a band teacher and the township treasurer; his parents are retired farmers, she said.

The man who identified himself as a brother of Daniel Rassier but wouldn't give his own name said his parents were "pretty upset" by the latest search.

"They've been there their whole life," he said. "It really bothers me because it really hurts them."

He said police also had been to his parents' property in 1989 and 2005. The second time, they dug and "tore the place up," doing "a very thorough investigation," the man said.

He noted that authorities also have searched other properties in the area.

When his mother called Wednesday, the man said, and told him authorities were at the farm again, he thought she was joking.

"It's the third time; it just won't end," he said. "It's getting to the point of harassment."

He said he thought his brother had given a DNA sample around 2005.

Asked why police were at his parents' property now, the man said his family didn't know.

"I have no idea what sparked (Wednesday's search)," he said. "Their whole theory was there wasn't a car there, and they think somebody did it on foot, and they keep coming back to that same thing."

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Rassier's brother continued: "I just hope it clears his name. He's been through the ringer."

In a 2008 profile of Daniel Rassier published after he had run a marathon, the St. Joseph Newsleader newspaper said he had lived in St. Joseph for all but two years in college. The article, which described him as "arguably one of the best trumpet players in central Minnesota," said he'd been a Cold Spring, Minn., elementary band instructor for 30 years.

Former St. Joseph Police Chief William Lorentz had only positive things to say about Robert Rassier on Wednesday. He said he had known Rassier for decades.

"He was very much a hard-working farmer at the time and very much a strong Christian," Lorentz said. "He goes to church, I think, daily."

Of the search on the Rassiers' property, Reischl said: "It's just kind of unbelievable because that's one of the nicest families. They're very caring people."

Jerry Wetterling, Jacob's father, said: "I really don't want to get into any particular suspects or people, because I really don't know what's going on over here. I just know there's lots of activity."

"When I drove to work this morning, there were five or six squad cars on that driveway, and I was extremely surprised."

Wetterling said previous leads have led nowhere.

"There's been leads that have been pursued aggressively for months at a time," he said. "There's been over 30,000 leads in this case. ... I just know

when there have been leads in the past, law enforcement will do whatever they think is necessary to pursue that particular lead. We've just been so grateful for all the interest and support, in people helping out and trying to find out what actually happened to Jacob.

"We've kind of learned for survival that we can't get too high or low over any particular leads," he said. "Otherwise, we'd be emotional wrecks."

Wetterling said he often shares a neighborly wave with Robert Rassier on his way to work in the morning as the elder man picks up the mail at the end of his driveway, but he was less familiar with Daniel Rassier.

"That's their driveway, where Jacob's last steps were seen," Wetterling said. "That's the last evidence of Jacob being in the area, was right there. I'm guessing that's why the activity is going on there."

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children had "some people on the ground" in St. Joseph, "working in support of the sheriff and the FBI," said Bob Lowery, executive director of the center's missing children division.

He said the center has had representatives "in and out of St. Joseph regularly over the last many years."

"We're always encouraged by any new leads, but we don't want to provide false hopes," Lowery said.

Lorentz, who was St. Joseph's police chief when Jacob was abducted, said he had no knowledge of the latest investigation. He retired from the police department years ago, with the Wetterling abduction still hanging over his head.

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"I hope they find something," Lorentz said. "(I was) always looking forward to having a good lead on something, but nothing develops. I just wish them luck."

Lorentz said that over the years, credible leads in the Wetterling abduction have been rare. "Not as often as I'd like them," he said.

A group of local children, riding dirt bikes and exchanging wild theories, noted Wednesday how it had been drilled into them since birth never to ride alone.

"Never go out by yourself. When I'm down here, I come with a friend," said Braden Koopmeiners, 14, parked across a field of soybeans from the road where a masked gunman took Jacob in October 1989.

Neighbors came from miles around, milling in pairs or driving slowly past the farm. Many said they didn't know what to think, but they just had to see.

"This is nuts. I can't believe this right now," said Nick Berg, 28, who went to the same school as Jacob.

Lawrence Nichols, an Eagan-based defense attorney who was a childhood neighbor of Patty Wetterling, said the burden of proof necessary to excavate private property was no greater than what is needed for a typical police search of a home or office.

"You just need a search warrant. ... Haven't you ever seen 'Cops'? They can go in with a sledgehammer," Nichols said.

"They need probable cause to get a warrant, and probable cause is basically, 'It's likely that fruits,

evidence or instrumentality of the crime might be found here,' " he said. "It's the judge's call."

The last development in the case came in January 2009, when news broke about a Milwaukee man with a possible link to Jacob's case. Vernon Seitz, who had confessed to killing two children in the 1950s and died in December 2008, was found to have news clippings and photos of young Jacob, along with child pornography and books on cannibalism, in his home.

But Milwaukee police said they found no connection between Seitz and Jacob's abduction or any other child abduction. Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said in January 2009 that his office worked with Milwaukee police and agreed there was no reason to believe Seitz was involved in Jacob's kidnapping.

The fate of Jacob Wetterling, who would now be 32, remains unknown. His is the most notorious missing-child case in Minnesota.

Jacob was with his brother and a friend when he was abducted just a half-mile from his home in St. Joseph, in central Minnesota. A gunman stepped out of the woods and disappeared with Jacob.

The missing boy's name has become synonymous with missing and vulnerable children, leading to the formation of the Jacob Wetterling Foundation by his parents in 1990.

The foundation, which later became the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center, merged with the National Child Protection Training Center in February. Its staff members lead community sex offender notification forums, among other efforts aimed at raising awareness of child sexual exploitation and abduction.

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The Wetterlings organized a children's concert last year at the College of St. Benedict in St. Joseph to mark the 20th anniversary of their son's abduction.

Patty Wetterling last year wrote and published a book, "Jacob's Hope," which she said was aimed at helping her grandchildren understand what happened to their uncle.

Interviewed by the Pioneer Press in October, she said she remains as dumbfounded as anyone as to how such a crime could take place in small-town America.

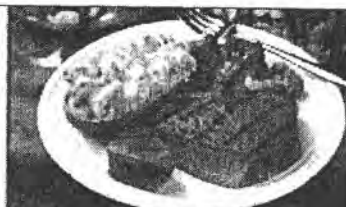
"We don't know what happened," she said. "It's just a whole bunch of 'we don't knows.' There's no such word as 'closure.' Answers. We need answers."

This story contains information from the Associated Press.

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July 1, 2010

## Few details emerge after day of investigation near Wetterling's abduction

By Kari Petrie and David Unze  
[kpetrie@stcloudtimes.com](mailto:kpetrie@stcloudtimes.com), [dunze@stcloudtimes.com](mailto:dunze@stcloudtimes.com)

### View photo gallery

ST. JOSEPH — More than 20 years after investigators scoured ditches, fields and rural properties for Jacob Wetterling, a sea of law enforcement converged Wednesday on the site where Wetterling was last seen.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said a court order prohibited him from saying why more than a dozen vehicles and numerous officers spent the day at 29748-91st Ave. FBI spokesman E.K. Wilson said the FBI was assisting in a search warrant operation in the area. Investigators from the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension also were involved in the search.

The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier, and directory information shows that Daniel Rassier also lists that address as his residence.

While nobody in law enforcement linked the search to the 11-year-old's 1989 abduction, Patty Wetterling said she was happy that investigators have continued to go back through the entire case and that they have gone "back to the beginning."

"Jacob's last footsteps are shown on that driveway," she said Wednesday.

Sanner said the Stearns County Attorney's Office had advised him that a court order prevented him from saying why his investigators were at the residence. He declined to describe the court order.

"Because of the court order, I'm not going to answer" whether the activity was related to the abduction of Wetterling, a crime that has gripped Central Minnesota for nearly 21 years.

"I do understand that the public is interested in what's going on," Sanner said. "I don't want to do anything at this point to compromise any potential prosecution."

Numerous unmarked vehicles and squad cars drove in and out of the residence Wednesday as Stearns County squad cars controlled access to the driveway.

No arrests were made in connection to the activity at the residence, Sanner said. Investigators would return to the property today, he said. He didn't know how long investigators would be at the Rassier property.

Robert Rassier told the Times in a phone conversation Wednesday that investigators were at his residence but that he didn't want to discuss the situation further.

Aerial photographs taken Wednesday morning by the St. Cloud Times showed as many as 17 vehicles, all-terrain vehicles and trailers on the property. Times aerial photos also show people moving into and around as many as five outbuildings at the residence.

Wetterling was 11 years old when he was abducted at gunpoint on Oct. 22, 1989, near the entry to the property's driveway as he, his brother and a friend biked home from a local store at dusk. His abduction led to the first federal mandates that each state create sex offender registries. Patty

Wetterling traveled the country to help pass that law.

For the first 14 years of the investigation, authorities had focused on a vehicle that a witness reported seeing near the abduction site. The driver came forward in 2003 and was ruled out as a suspect.

Authorities decided it was likely that the abductor hadn't used a vehicle. They then changed their theory of the abduction to focus on the likelihood that the abductor was a local resident.

Patty Wetterling said Wednesday that she hadn't been told by investigators about the search at the Rassier residence. She said she was "pleased for a lot of reasons" by the search.

Both families have "been traveling on parallel tracks," she said, because they both want answers to what happened on that road more than 20 years ago. Both families could receive some form of closure from the search, she said.

Jerry Wetterling said Wednesday that he also wasn't aware that a search of the property was coming.

He saw four or five squad cars at the end of the property's driveway when he drove past on his way to work Wednesday morning, he said.

"I'm just glad that everything is being pursued that can be pursued," he said.

Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall also cited the court order as the reason she couldn't comment on the search. The moment anything related to the search becomes public, she said, the information will be released.

Two flatbed trailers left the property Wednesday evening with items for the St. Joseph Parish Festival that were stored on the farm, including metal framing for tents and large plastic barrels, also for the festival.

Joe Prom, of Joe's Auto Wrecking, was one of the people who went onto the property to get the items.

He said a group of officers were leaving as he arrived and that he didn't notice anything out of order.

Also seen leaving the property was a minivan with Louisiana license plates that had a sticker on the back that read "Louisiana K9 Search and Rescue." There were two animal crates in the back.

Rm/32

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## Investigators revisit Wetterling abduction

County, state and federal agents spent 14 hours searching a property near where the 11-year-old boy was taken by a masked man in 1989.

By JAMES WALSH and RICHARD MERYHEW, Star Tribune staff writers

Last update: July 1, 2010 - 6:51 AM

ST. JOSEPH, MINN. - More than two decades after 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted by a masked man at gunpoint here, investigators and earth-moving equipment descended on a farm near where he was last seen.

Tight-lipped police and FBI agents spent more than 14 hours Wednesday searching a farmhouse and adjacent property near the spot where Wetterling vanished on a warm October night in 1989. They are expected to remain overnight at the farm where they had previously questioned a resident and taken DNA samples.

As children pedaled past the scene Wednesday evening on bicycles, officials said nothing more than they were conducting an

investigation.

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother and a longtime activist for missing children, said authorities had alerted her to their plans Wednesday.

"I'm grateful the investigation is still going on, and I'm grateful people are still willing to help," she said.

Stearns County Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold said that a court order prevented investigators from discussing why they were at the spot, located about a half mile from the Wetterling home in St. Joseph, or what, specifically, they hoped to find.

"All I can say is that we are conducting an investigation today," Bechtold said. "Any of the details of the investigation are restricted from dissemination by the court order."

Bechtold said the order was issued earlier this week.

Investigators from the FBI and state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension were at the scene to assist Stearns County. At one point, 17 law enforcement vehicles were parked around the farmhouse and outbuildings.

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Authorities involved in the investigation said the search came after two young agents working the case took a fresh look at the file.

There were no new tips that sparked the search, "no nothing, just young cops looking at the file and they said 'Maybe we should go take a look,'" said an official familiar with developments.

Asked if the agents were merely working off a hunch, the official said, "Yeah."

He also said that as of Wednesday night, it didn't appear investigators found anything significant.

Just after 6 p.m., a silver Dodge Charger, two SUVs and a BCA crime lab truck pulled out of the long dirt driveway leading to the farm, turned right and headed back toward St. Joseph.

A few minutes later, two flatbed trucks, one red, one blue, hauling dozens of plastic drums and green scaffolding exited the property as well. A deputy at the scene said officials were simply taking items stored into town where they were to be used in a community festival this weekend.

## Familiar turf

Wetterling was abducted shortly after 9 p.m. Oct. 22, 1989, while heading home from a local convenience store with his brother Trevor, then 10, and best friend, Aaron Larson, who was 11. The kidnapping, taking place in a relatively small and quiet prairie town about 75 miles northwest of the Twin Cities, shocked Minnesotans like few crimes before it, gripping a region for weeks and making headlines across the country.

"The first thing I remember was the flash of the gun, and a guy saying 'Stop, I have a gun,'" Larson said last fall on the 20th anniversary of the kidnapping. "I caught my breath. I thought it was a high school kid pulling a joke on us. ... Then it hits you: this is happening, it's no joke."


Despite more than 40,000 leads from all over the world during the past two decades, Jacob hasn't been seen since.

No one has been arrested in connection with the case.

The property searched Wednesday has been targetted by Stearns County investigators before.

In 2004, they began questioning a man who

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lives there and obtained DNA samples from him, according a relative who spoke with the Star Tribune at that time. The man, now 54, lives with his parents, both in their 80s.

The relative also said the man received an envelope back then with the return address of the Stearns County Sheriff's Office. The envelope included a handwritten letter signed by Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling.

It implored anyone with information about Jacob's disappearance to come forward.

The relative said the man called authorities the night of the abduction to report a suspicious car turning around in his driveway.

Authorities didn't call the man a suspect in 2004, and the relative said then that he believed the man was innocent, adding, "He just wouldn't do something like that."

When the man drove up to the property Wednesday, he was stopped by deputies who asked several questions. After a few minutes, a deputy went to the man's mailbox, grabbed his mail and gave it to him.

Later, a woman answering the phone at the man's home hung up when asked about the

search of the property.

## 'Back to the beginnings'

Patty Wetterling, who works in St. Paul, said she had been told by investigators that the search would be conducted sometime soon.

She said she got a call from authorities Wednesday morning at about the same time that her husband, Jerry, saw police vehicles drive into the farm near their St. Joseph home.

"He was wondering what was going on," she said.

"We knew they were going to do it, but just not today," she added. "I knew they were revisiting old stuff, and I got a call this morning saying it was today."

"It's a good investigation," she added. "They are going back to the beginning. They are reviewing a lot of things."

Stearns County Attorney Janelle Kendall declined to comment about the investigation or why police returned to the house to do more work.

But, she added, "What I can say is this has

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Throughout the day, small groups of neighbors and residents wandered past to check to see what was going on.


One was Jane Thielen, the mother of a 14-year-old boy.

Thielen said she was certain when Jacob was abducted that the kidnapper would soon be caught.

Emotions may have faded over time, but, she added, "a day like today brings it all back."

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## Investigators resume search of farm near Wetterling abduction

JAMES WALSH AND RICHARD MERYHEW, Star Tribune staff writers

ST. JOSEPH, MINN. - Shortly before 6:30 a.m. Thursday, investigators began returning to the St. Joseph area farm near where Jacob Wetterling was abducted, and which they had searched most of the day Wednesday.

A Stearns County sheriff captain was followed by an FBI special agent, and they were followed a few minutes later by several other investigators, including a couple of K-9 teams.

The Bureau of Criminal Apprehension crime scene truck also drove onto the farm.

In all, about 10 to 12 vehicles entered the site before 7 a.m.

At 7:30 a.m., the 54-year-old man who lives on the farm and whom authorities have questioned before and taken DNA samples from, drove away from the site, with his father and mother in the car.

On Wednesday, investigators and earth-moving equipment descended on the farm near where the 11-year-old boy was abducted by a masked man at gunpoint more than two decades ago.

Tight-lipped police and FBI agents spent more than 14 hours Wednesday searching a farmhouse and adjacent property near the spot where Wetterling vanished on a warm October night in 1989.

As children pedaled past the scene Wednesday evening on bicycles, officials said nothing more than they were conducting an investigation.

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother and a longtime activist for missing children, said authorities had alerted her to their plans Wednesday.

"I'm grateful the investigation is still going on, and I'm grateful people are still willing to help," she said.

Stearns County Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold said that a court order prevented investigators from discussing why they were at the spot, located about a half mile from the Wetterling home in St. Joseph, or what, specifically, they hoped to find.

"All I can say is that we are conducting an investigation today," Bechtold said. "Any of the details of the investigation are restricted from dissemination by the court order."

Bechtold said the order was issued earlier this week.

Investigators from the FBI and state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension were at the scene to assist Stearns County. At one point, 17 law enforcement vehicles were parked around the farmhouse and outbuildings.

Authorities involved in the investigation said the search came after two young agents working the case took a fresh look at the file.

There were no new tips that sparked the search, "no nothing, just young cops looking at the file and they said 'Maybe we should go take a look,' " said an official familiar with developments.

Rm/37

Asked if the agents were merely working off a hunch, the official said, "Yeah."

He also said that as of Wednesday night, it didn't appear investigators found anything significant.

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## Farm searched near 1989 abduction site of 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling

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Tight-lipped investigators and earth-moving equipment have been searching a farm in Minnesota near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint by a masked man in 1989, the *Star-Tribune* reports.

Authorities had previously questioned a resident at the farm and taken DNA samples, the Minneapolis newspaper says.

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother and a longtime activist for missing children, said she was alerted by authorities to the latest operation and says she is "grateful" the investigation is still going on.

A court order prevents officials from discussing why they are at the farm, which is about a half-mile from the Wetterling home in St. Joseph, Minn., the newspaper reports.

The *Star-Tribune* says two young agents who were taking a fresh look at the case prompted the search of the farm.

(Posted by Doug Stanglin)



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## Farm Searched 3rd Time Since '89 Abduction

ST JOSEPH, Minn. (WCCO) — Investigators returned Thursday to a central Minnesota property near the spot where an 11-year-old boy was abducted at gunpoint nearly 21 years ago.

Jacob Wetterling was riding his bike with his brother and a friend in 1989 when a masked man with a gun approached them. The boys said the man took Jacob. There have been no arrests.

Jacob's mom, Patty Wetterling, said it was at the end of the farm's driveway that footprints belonging to Jacob were last seen.

Authorities have said little about the search that started Wednesday in St. Joseph, Minn., but they were on the property for 10 hours with dogs that were sniffing the area.

Stearns County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Bruce Bechtold says a court order restricted him from discussing the investigation. FBI spokesman E. K. Wilson said the FBI was assisting in search warrant operations in the area.

On Thursday, Stearns County officials, an FBI special agent, K-9 teams, and a Bureau of Criminal Apprehension crime scene truck are all on the scene.

Different media organizations have been camped out near the property since the investigation started.

A backhoe and dump truck were spotted entering the area too. Views from the WCCO-TV helicopter showed crews digging on the property.

Patty Wetterling arrived on the scene before noon to see for herself what was happening. She said she was going to wait out the investigation at her house, located just a half-mile down the road.

She said it is an emotional time and the helicopters in the air brought back all kinds of memories from the search 21 years ago.

"It's a little overwhelming coming down the road, ya know, I wasn't here yesterday ... and just wow," said Wetterling.

The farm is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. They also owned it when Jacob disappeared.

At the time of kidnapping, their adult son, Daniel, was living with them, but his parents were out of town.

Investigators told the family that they would be on the property through the afternoon Thursday.

This is the third time that the farm has been searched in 21 years since Jacob's disappearance.

The Jacob Wetterling Resource Center said they haven't been contacted from police regarding the current investigation.

They did say that the interest in Jacob's story proves the "resiliency of hope for all of those who feel connected to his story and to his family."

WCCO-TV reporter Caroline Lowe is in St. Joseph, and will have live reports at noon, 5 p.m. and 6 p.m.

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A backhoe and dump truck could be spotted entering the area Thursday, which may point to signs that investigators could be digging in the area.  
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, 2010 9:40 pm US/Central

## Investigators Wrap Up Search Near Abduction Site



Reporting  
Caroline Lowe

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (WCCO) — Law enforcement from Stearns County, the FBI and the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension wrapped up a two-day search of a property near where Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989.

From the air you can see the heavy equipment that was used to dig up some dirt around the property. The search produced six mounds of dirt dug up by a backhoe. The soil was transported to a Stearns County Public Works Facility, a short distance away, where it was guarded under heavy security.

Because of a court order, law enforcement is not able to tell us much about what's been going on at the property except that they are executing a search warrant.

Jacob Wetterling was biking home from the convenience store with his brother and a friend when a gunman came out of the bushes and took him. He was just 11-years-old.

Now, 21 years later, the investigation is once again centered near that abduction site.

Sources say a police K-9 that searched the property 21 years ago picked up Jacob's scent on the road leading into that site. The K-9 lost the scent after about 200 feet on to the property.

The farm is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. They also owned it when Jacob disappeared.

Investigators, under orders from a judge, would not to discuss this massive search with the media or even with Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling.

Patty Wetterling made a brief stop to see the search on Thursday and then headed to her home, which is less than a half mile away, to wait for any developments.

"I don't know what to think and then I what do I want? Do you hope they'll find something? I'm not sure. Do I hope they don't find something? That's not good either. It's real confusing," she said.

Patty Wetterling said she is very grateful law enforcement officers haven't stopped their commitment to finding Jacob.

"I think the entire state of Minnesota needs to know what happened to Jacob, you know, where, who did this, what happened, where is he? Its answers, we need answers. We need to know," she said.

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The search produced six mounds of dirt dug up by a backhoe. The soil was transported to a Stearns County Public Works Facility, a short distance away, where it was guarded under heavy security.  
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Published July 01 2010

## Investigators dig near site of '89 child abduction

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (AP) — Investigators used a backhoe Thursday to dig up the central Minnesota property near the site where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted nearly 21 years ago, while his mother waited for answers at her home just a half-mile away.

By: AMY FORLITI; PATRICK CONDON, Associated Press

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (AP) — Investigators used a backhoe Thursday to dig up the central Minnesota property near the site where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted nearly 21 years ago, while his mother waited for answers at her home just a half-mile away.

Patty Wetterling said she hoped they would find something at the property in St. Joseph, she's wasn't sure what.

"It's kind of like, what do we want to happen? What do we want them to find?" Wetterling said. "Clothes, a shoe, a body? Ick. It's all troubling."

Authorities said little about the search that began a day earlier. Stearns County Chief Sheriff's Deputy Bruce Bechtold reiterated that a court order prevented him from discussing details. Authorities did not even confirm it had anything to do with Jacob.

The search concluded Thursday evening, Sheriff John Sanner told the St. Cloud Times. He said the phase of an investigation focusing on the property near where Jacob was abducted was complete and no arrests had been made.

Sanner would not comment about what investigators found or were looking for, citing the court order, but said a news release would be issued Friday morning.

"The sheriff told me he really can't talk to anybody about it, and that means us too," Wetterling told The Associated Press, adding she was deeply touched by the continued interest in the case, and grateful for law enforcement efforts.

Hobbling on crutches and with scrapes on her face after a recent bicycle accident, Wetterling spoke to the AP in the living room of her home on a wooded cul-de-sac while the search was ongoing. An unframed photograph of Jacob rested on a nearby piano, as the phone rang nearly nonstop with calls from family, friends and the media.

Wetterling admitted the sudden flurry of activity has been emotionally difficult.

"It brings you back to the beginning," she said. "The helicopters make my heart race. It's kind of raw."

On Oct. 22, 1989, Jacob was riding his bicycle with his brother and a friend when they were approached by a masked gunman. He told the boys to stop, and lay on their stomachs in a ditch. He then ordered the other two boys to run away, and Jacob has been missing ever since.

There have been no arrests and authorities have cleared more than 40,000 leads over the years.

Jacob's disappearance from the town about 80 miles northwest of Minneapolis rocked Minnesota and drew national attention. His mother became an advocate for missing children and helped pass federal and state laws to track sex offenders and alert the public when children go missing. In 1990, she and Jacob's father, Jerry Wetterling, founded what's now known as the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center.

"This is really a case that transcends so many others," said Ernie Allen, president of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. "Patty Wetterling has become a voice of hope for thousands of other families." Thanks to her work, he said, more than 716,000 registered sex offenders are in databases across the country.

Allen said his organization had technical experts on the scene. Stearns County officials, the FBI, K-9 teams, and the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension also were on the 158-acre property Thursday.

The property itself was blocked off to media, and is hidden behind a grove of trees. But aerial footage by KTSP-TV showed a backhoe excavating the land. A dump truck hauled away loads of dirt.

The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier, who are in their 80s. Their 54-year-old son, Daniel, lives with them. A phone message left at the house was not returned Thursday.

The Jacob Wetterling Resource Center released a statement saying it had not been contacted by law enforcement about the search.

"We have no comment regarding why the investigation is being pursued, if it is connected to Jacob, or why the investigation is being looked into at this time," the statement said.

With the recent recovery of Jaycee Dugard, a California girl who was kidnapped and found alive 18 years later, there is even more hope Jacob will be found alive, Allen said, "but if something terrible happened ... these families deserve answers."

Wetterling allowed herself a glimmer of hope Thursday.

"Maybe they'll find a current picture of Jacob and he's living in Jamaica," she said. "I'd like that."

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## Dig revives 21-year-old Minnesota abduction case

By AMY FORLITI (AP) - 3 days ago

MINNEAPOLIS — Nearly 21 years after an 11-year-old boy was abducted on a familiar central Minnesota road, authorities acknowledged Friday there is new activity in the case, after investigators spent two days searching and digging at a farm near where Jacob Wetterling was last seen.

The Stearns County Sheriff's Department said Friday they had seized several items during their search of the 158-acre property in St. Joseph and confirmed that the search was related to Jacob's disappearance, which drew national attention and led to state and federal sex offender registration laws.

Authorities did not describe the items seized or release any additional details. The department said in a statement that analysis of the items could take weeks or months.

Jacob was riding his bicycle with his brother and a friend on Oct. 22, 1989 when they were approached by a masked gunman who told the boys to stop and lay on their stomachs in a ditch. He ordered the other two boys to run away, and Jacob has been missing ever since.

There have been no arrests and authorities have cleared more than 40,000 leads over the years.

Jacob was abducted along the road at the end of the driveway to the property that was searched. The farm is owned by Robert Rassier and his wife, Rita, who are both in their 80s. Their son, Daniel Rassier, also lives there and was home the night of the abduction. A woman who answered the phone at the house Friday said no one would comment. Another message left by The Associated Press was not returned.

But Daniel Rassier, 54, told the St. Cloud Times that investigators have interviewed him "numerous times" about Jacob's disappearance, and that he has submitted to a lie-detector test, hypnosis and DNA sampling.

"I had absolutely nothing to do with anything with Jacob," he told the newspaper. "I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

Sheriff John Sanner told the Times that Daniel Rassier is a "person of interest" in Jacob's disappearance.

Rassier said he believes investigators came to his property because of new canine resources, and he'll do what he can to help. Sanner told the newspaper that investigators developed probable cause in recent weeks that led to the search, although he would not elaborate.

Sanner did not return a phone message left by the AP.

Officials from the sheriff's office, the FBI, the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, K-9 handlers, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children converged on the Rassier property Wednesday. By Thursday, earthmoving equipment began digging, and truck loads of what appeared to be dirt were hauled away.

Officials said they couldn't release additional details of their investigation.

Court orders by Stearns County District Judge Vicki Landwehr said four separate search warrants would not be made available to the public at this time because their release could hamper the investigation.

There have been no arrests connected to the search, which wrapped up Thursday.

After the kidnapping in the town about 80 miles northwest of Minneapolis, Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, became an advocate for missing children and helped pass federal and state laws to track sex offenders and alert the public when children go missing. In 1990, she and Jacob's father, Jerry Wetterling, founded what's now known as the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center.

Patty Wetterling said Friday that the sheriff shared the news with her the night before, but didn't answer any questions or say anything beyond what he told the media.

"They can't. So we know as much as you know," she said. "I didn't really ask a lot of questions. I was grateful for the heads up."

"It's been my experience that these things take a long time," she added. "You wait and see — and you hope. We hope we get some answers."

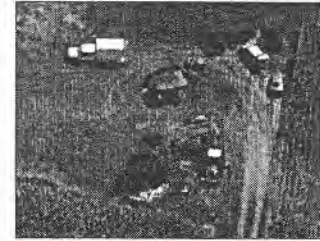
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Investigators Dig For New Evidence in Wetterling Case  
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**AP** Associated Press

Photo 1 of 2



A backhoe digs up the ground on a St. Joseph, Minn. property on Thursday, July 1, 2010 near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted at gunpoint nearly 21 years ago. (AP Photo/The Star-Tribune, Brian Peterson) ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS OUT. MINNEAPOLIS-AREA TV OUT, MAGS OUT



Map



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## Investigators Dig For New Evidence in Wetterling Case

Officials Continue 21-Year Search for Missing Jacob Wetterling

By JOHN WETENHALL

July 2, 2010—

Minnesota investigators today confirmed that the search of a local farm near St. Joseph, Minn., earlier this week was related to the 21-year-old case of Jacob Wetterling, who disappeared after an apparent abduction at the farm in 1989.

"A number of items were seized pursuant to the search warrants and will require additional processing and or analysis which could take several weeks to possibly months to complete," the Stearns County Sheriff Department statement said.

Crews arrived at the farm on Wednesday and Thursday to search and dig on the premises.

The sheriff's office also confirmed that it had been joined in the search by the FBI, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, and a team of search and rescue dogs and their handlers.

The statement also included a copy of the court orders that previously prevented officials from disclosing any details about the new activity in the search. Not even Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, knew what investigators were doing at the farm a half mile down the road from her house.

"They can't tell me," Patty Wetterling told ABCNews.com Thursday. "I do believe it's connected."

Jacob, then 11, was taken by a masked man from the driveway of the farm while his brother and a friend watched. Even after 21 years, Patty Wetterling is cautiously optimistic about the search.

"I'm hopeful that they'll find something," Wetterling told ABCNews.com. "We're keeping our fingers crossed, saying a little prayer here and there."

"It's hard," she said. "It's very confusing, what to feel, what to think, what to do."

She praised law enforcement officials for their continued attention to a search that she has never given up on. "What it shows to me is the absolute commitment of law enforcement to never quit," Wetterling said.

Ernie Allen, president and CEO of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, echoed Wetterling's sentiment.

"This sounds a loud clear message that this case is still alive and the investigation continues," Allen told ABCNews.com Thursday.

Allen is also hopeful that the new efforts will finally lead to some conclusion.

"At a minimum, these people deserve some answers. They need to know what happened," he said.

## Jacob Wetterling Was Abducted While Bicycling With a Brother and a Friend

A man who answered a cell phone registered to the farm property refused to confirm his identity and refused to answer any questions about the renewed activity on the farm earlier this week.

"I'm not answering any stupid questions," the man told ABCNews.com. "We've been questioned and harassed for 21 years. We're done."

Local ABC News affiliate KSTP reported that up to 17 vehicles were on the property Wednesday and many returned today. A dump truck filled with dirt left the property today and came back empty soon after.

Jacob was abducted on Oct. 22, 1989, as he, his brother Trevor and a friend were returning home on their bicycles from picking up a video. It was the first time Jacob had been out alone at night on his bike.

On the return home, according to the other boys, a masked gunman stopped all three -- and then drove off with Jacob.

All that remained of him on the gravel road was a spot where Jacob's footprints seemed to show resistance. And then nothing.

Over the past two decades, Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, has sustained herself with hope.

"We hope for Jacob, for all of our grandkids, for every child who's home safe today and every child who's missing," she said in an interview with "Nightline" last October on the 20th anniversary of the boy's disappearance.

Over the years, his mother has found her voice, and her mission: to find Jacob and help protect other children.

lot of people ask, 'How do you do it?' How could I not?" she said. "Every parent knows, you would do anything for your children, and our anything [has] got to be a little more than we ever would have dreamed, but you continue. We'll do anything that we can to find him."

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## Police reopen Minnesota abduction cold case

Updated 3d 10h ago

By Kari Petrie and David Unze, USA TODAY

A two-day search of a Minnesota farm has breathed new life into the nearly 21-year-old Jacob Wetterling abduction — a case that drew national attention and led to state and federal sex offender registration laws.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said Friday that Dan Rassier, who lives at the St. Joseph Township farm, is a "person of interest" in the case. Rassier said he will do what he can to help authorities.

The Stearns County Sheriff's Office issued a statement saying it seized "a number of items" during the search.

Those items need to be processed and analyzed, which could take several weeks or months to complete, Sanner said. No arrests have been made, he said.

Wetterling was abducted Oct. 22, 1989, when a masked gunman stopped him, his brother and a friend as they returned home from a convenience store. Wetterling's brother and friend were let go by the man who took Wetterling.

The abduction happened at the end of the driveway to the property owned by Robert and Rita Rassier, Dan Rassier's parents. Dan, 54, lives there with his parents. He also was living at the house at the time of the abduction.

Dan Rassier said in a phone interview with the St. Cloud Times Friday that investigators have interviewed him "numerous times" about Wetterling's disappearance. He said he has submitted to a lie-detector test, hypnosis and DNA sampling.

Sanner said Rassier has submitted to several tests but couldn't recall specifics Friday afternoon.

"I had absolutely nothing to do with anything with Jacob," Rassier said. "I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

Rassier said he believes investigators came back to his property this week because of new canine resources. He said he supports any effort to do a search in a new and better way.

"I'm all for it," he said.

Rassier says he is cooperating with authorities and has plans to meet with them in the future. Rassier is concerned mainly with how the attention is affecting his family.


"For over 20 years, we have experienced our own never-ending nightmare," he said. "We realize that it's nothing like what the Wetterlings have gone through."

Patty Wetterling said Friday that she was "exhausted" from the events of the week, but that she gained strength from what investigators were doing.

"The big message is that the sheriff's department proved that you never give up on our children," she said. "That's huge. They put resources and energy and time and skill into this, and it's very strengthening to me."

Sanner said in an interview Friday that four search warrants have been executed "at or near" the Rassier

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some. His office released four court orders that free investigators from their obligation to file the executed search warrants in court, which would make them public documents.

Times

Filing of the executed search warrants and accompanying inventories of what investigators took from the Rassier property "could cause future related searches to be unsuccessful and could create substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation of the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling," according to the orders signed by Stearns County District Court Judge Vicki Landwehr.

There is "a lot of information to process," Sanner said Friday. He said investigators are working with "a lot of volume." He wouldn't speak specifically about what was found.

On Thursday, investigators dug up a portion of the property about 1,000 feet from the house. Dump trucks were seen arriving at the property and leaving filled with soil. The soil was taken to the gated county public works facility in Waite Park where it is covered with a tarp inside a building.

When asked if the search of the property was significant to the case as a whole, Sanner said it was too early to answer that question. Investigators don't know the significance until they process all the items, he said.

Investigators in recent weeks developed probable cause that led to the search of the property, he said. They were then able to get additional resources to help with the search.

He wouldn't comment on what additional probable cause was developed, saying that would be counter-productive to the investigation.

The sheriff's office was assisted by the FBI, the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, the National Center of Missing and Exploited Children and search and rescue dogs.

Sanner said he's not too concerned about the age of any evidence that could be found. Technology that can help in the investigation keeps advancing.

"We don't ever stop trying," he said.

*Petrie and Unze report for the St. Cloud (Minn.)*

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Published on FOX 21 Online (<http://www.fox21online.com>)

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## Authorities wrap up two-day investigation in Wetterling abduction

Created Jul 2 2010 - 9:00pm

By Tracee Tolentino, FOX 21 News

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. - The Stearns County Sheriff's Office spent the past two days searching the property near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted on October 22, 1989.

On Friday, authorities confirmed the search was related to the Wetterling abduction but aren't saying what prompted them to take a closer look at the property. Large equipment was brought in to dig up part of the property. A number of items were seized from the property but what they are or why is still unknown.

The case has remained open for the past 21 years. "That's absolutely the most heartening part of all this, is that no body's quit, you know we're not giving up until we find Jacob and find out who did this, what happened, where is he. Those are questions I believe every Minnesotan needs to know," says Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling.

Authorities say the items they've seized will require additional processing and analysis which could take weeks or months.

A man who lives at the farm says he's been questioned by authorities numerous times about the case, but says he had nothing to do with the abduction. He says he'll do what he can to help in the investigation. There have been no arrests connected to this week's search.

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Source URL: <http://www.fox21online.com/news/authorities-wrap-2-day-investigation-wetterling-abduction>



## Strong, but wounded family the real story behind Jacob's abduction

ST JOSEPH, Minn.-- Over 21 years time, stories on the abduction of Jacob Wetterling have focused on suspects, investigators, missing children, and safety issues.

Peel back the layers and at it's core, Jacob's story is about a family: wounded but strong, refusing to give up hope they will someday learn his fate.

"I hear those helicopters and it just brings you back to the beginning," Patty Wetterling told reporters, as special investigative teams executed search warrants on a farm near the spot Jacob was kidnapped.

The Wetterling story... Patty's story... is about a mom who misses her boy, and can still see him in her dreams.

"It was the most bizarre dream," Patty told KARE 11's Allen Costantini Thursday. "I hadn't seen him for all these years and he looked up at me, this makes me cry, and he said, Mom how did you get so old? I thought, you know it has been a really long time."

She is not the only one changed by that day 21 years ago. Residents of St. Joseph remain wounded, knowing it happened in their community.

"I don't know of anybody here who hasn't been haunted by what happened," shared Joyce Foster. "That could have been our kid... (I) just think about it all the time."

Foster thinks about it because it could have been her child, on an innocent bike ride not far from home. But in truth, it was Patty Wetterling's boy... the one whose bedroom remains just as it was a seeming lifetime ago.

"I talk to Jacob," Patty Wetterling said. "I still believe we are connected,"

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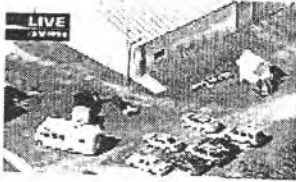
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**KSTP.COM — 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS****Rassier Family Talks About Investigation**

Updated: 07/02/2010 9:50 PM KSTP.com By: Ryan Ruud



The family that owns the property at the center of a two day investigation just yards from the last known whereabouts of Jacob Wetterling is speaking out.

The Rassiers say they were as surprised as everyone else when the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, FBI and Stearns County Sheriff's Department rolled onto their property earlier this week.

The family confirms that the truck loads of what appeared to be dirt removed from their property was mainly ash. The ash, they say, is from their wood burning boiler that heats the farm.

Daniel Rassier, the adult Son of Robert and Rita Rassier, has been interviewed by law enforcement over the past two decades.

The Rassier family confirms with 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS that Daniel continues to cooperate with law enforcement in connection to the developments out this week.

Jacob's mother Patty told 5 EYEWITNESS NEWS that she doesn't know what was taken from the farm but she is okay with that right now.

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## 'Person Of Interest' Named In Wetterling Hunt

The St. Cloud Times Reports That The Sheriff Wants To Know More About Dan Rassier

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (WCCO) — Officials in Stearns County said a number of items were seized in the two-day search of a St. Joseph property near the site of Jacob Wetterling's abduction. And a newspaper reported that a man who lived on the property at the time is a "person of interest."

The sheriff's office issued a news release Friday confirming that the search is in connection to Wetterling's case. It also said in the 21-year history of the case, the commitment to solving it has never wavered.

Authorities said Friday that the items seized will require additional processing and analysis, and that could take several weeks or months.

Truckloads of ash were taken from the property, mostly from the wood-burning boiler used to heat the farm.

Hennepin County Sheriff Rich Stanek used to investigate homicides. He said just a very small amount of bone fragment a pinhead-size bit of blood is enough to find DNA, even 20 years later, even if it's been burned.

"It's very hard to destroy all evidence related to a crime," said Stanek.

He pointed to the case of Katie Poirier. Investigators found a fragment of her tooth years ago in Donald Blum's fire pit.

The St. Cloud Times reported Friday that the Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said that Dan Rassier is a "person of interest" in Wetterling's disappearance.

Rassier has lived on the property with his parents since before the abduction. The newspaper quoted him as saying: "I had absolutely nothing to do with anything with Jacob. I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

Rassier also told the newspaper his family is cooperating with authorities.

"For over 20 years, we have experienced our own never-ending nightmare," he told the St. Cloud Times. "We realize that it's nothing like what the Wetterlings have gone through."

Officials have said they are bound by a court order prohibiting them from talking about the investigation, because doing so could "cause future related searches to be unsuccessful and could create a substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation into the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling."

On Thursday, Chief Sheriff's Deputy Bruce Bechtold said that once the search was completed, officials might still not be able to say anything because of that court order.

Officials wrapped up the search Thursday, after digging up the property near the site of Jacob's kidnapping. The farm is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. They also owned it when Wetterling disappeared.

In 1989, 11-year-old Wetterling was biking home from the convenience store with his brother and a friend when a gunman came out of the bushes and took him.

Now, 21 years later, the investigation is once again centered near that abduction site.

Sources say a police K-9 that searched the property 21 years ago picked up Wetterling's scent on the road leading into that site. The K-9 lost the scent after about 200 feet on to the property.

Investigators, under orders from a judge, would not to discuss this massive search with the media or even with Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling.

Patty Wetterling made a brief stop to see the search on Thursday and then headed to her home, which is less than a half mile away, to wait for any developments. She said she is very grateful law enforcement officers haven't stopped their commitment to finding Jacob.

"I think the entire state of Minnesota needs to know what happened to Jacob, you know, where, who did this, what happened, where is he? Its answers, we need answers. We need to know," she said.

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Jacob Wetterling was 11 years old when he was abducted from his hometown of St. Joseph, Minn., on Oct. 22, 1989. (File) CBS

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## Former Wetterling Investigator Speaks About New Developments



For the first time, the man who supervised the investigation the day Jacob Wetterling disappeared is talking about the new developments in the case.

It's the case Al Garber says he most remembers.

Garber spent about 14 weeks in St. Joseph in the early phase of investigation.

Looking back on it, Garber doesn't know what could have been done different.

The only thing he knows for a fact, investigators couldn't get anyone to tell them what happened.

He commends the Sheriff's Department, FBI and BCA on working this case tirelessly.

He says the new developments must be based on solid investigation but he also warns against jumping to conclusions.



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## Sheriff: Number of items seized in 2-day search

by Ambar Espinoza, Minnesota Public Radio  
July 2, 2010

St. Joseph, Minn. — Stearns County sheriff's officials said Friday they seized a number of items during a two-day search of a St. Joseph farm near the site of 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling's abduction 21 years ago.

Officials confirmed that the investigation is related to Minnesota's most notorious kidnapping case. About six truck loads of dirt from the property were hauled away to a county highway department maintenance yard. No arrests have been made so far.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner and Chief Deputy Bruce Bechtold said in a news release it could take several weeks to possibly months to process and analyze the items investigators seized.

Neither Sanner nor Bechtold was available today to comment on the case. The news release says the commitment and determination to find answers about Jacob Wetterling's disappearance has not wavered over the past 21 years.

Initially, the sheriff's office wouldn't confirm that this week's search was related to the Wetterling kidnapping. But Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, told reporters yesterday that the sheriff did call her.

"I'd he said the same thing he's told to all of you, you know, 'I'm sorry I can't tell you anything. I hope your family is okay. Just so you know, we're not going to give up 'til we find answers: who took Jacob, where is he.'" she said.

Four court orders signed by Stearns County District Judge Vicki Landwehr authorized the search warrants to be sealed and retained by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension. The orders said public release of the documents could hamper the ongoing investigation into Jacob's disappearance.

The BCA, the FBI, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children all assisted with this investigation. Nationally recognized search and rescue canine handlers also helped with the search.

Over the two days, sheriff deputies were parked at the entrance to the property owned by Rita and Robert Rassier. The officers were mum about the investigation's activities.

"We don't know anything anyway. The sheriff does. We were just told to be here," one deputy said.

All the activity unsettled some neighbors who live down the hill from the property. Jeanne Schiermers has lived in St. Joseph for more than 30 years.

She says back when Jacob disappeared there were sheriff deputies, dogs, and volunteers searching the fields.

"I thought they did a thorough job then, so this is all new again, like it happened all yesterday is what it feels like," she said.

Schiermers and several other community members wonder why this investigation is happening now.

Law enforcement agencies point to new technology that has helped solve cold cases in recent years.

Sgt. Anita Muldoon leads the cold case unit at the St. Paul Police Department. She says the DNA lab at the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension has new technology called touch DNA that can help identify skeletal remains.

"When DNA profiling first began -- oh, you know, 20 years ago I think they started using it -- they needed a large amount of evidence or blood or some sort of bodily fluid to test, to obtain a profile from a person," Muldoon said. "And now they just need one skin cell."

Muldoon says it's possible that's what investigators may be searching for in the Wetterling case, although she's not involved in the case.

# TwinCities.com

## Wetterling investigators at nearby farm for 2nd day

By Tad Vezner and Rubén Rosario  
Pioneer Press

Updated: 07/02/2010 12:57:36 AM CDT

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. — Patty Wetterling slowed and said hello to a Stearns County sheriff's deputy Thursday afternoon as she passed the site of her son's disappearance.

"You hear the helicopter, and it just takes you back. . . This is certainly bigger than anything that's happened recently," Wetterling said later.

It was the first time she passed the site since investigators returned Wednesday to search a farm near where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was kidnapped more than 20 years ago.

On Thursday, investigators came back with a mobile crime lab, backhoe and dump truck. Throughout the day, the truck left the property, loaded with dirt.

The farm is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier, who live there with their 54-year-old son, Daniel A. Rassier. A family member said Wednesday that the son previously has given DNA samples, taken a lie-detector test and been hypnotized in connection with the kidnapping.

A federal law enforcement source said a recommendation to conduct a more-thorough examination of the area of Jacob's disappearance led

to the latest search.

The farm had been searched twice before but in other locations.

The source said there was no new information in the case.

The state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and FBI took part in the operation.

Patty Wetterling passed it all by Thursday as her sister drove her to her home a quarter-mile down the dead-end road. There, she said, she would call in sick from work, make some coffee and

knit some booties for her expectant daughter. She said she'll stay away from the TV.

"I just needed to be back. I just needed to be here," she said.

The sheriff has called her — but only to say he can't tell her anything, just have faith.

"I don't know what to think," Wetterling said. "And then I don't know what I, what do I want? Do you hope they'll find something? I'm not sure. Do I hope they don't? ... That's not good either. It's a really confusing place to be ... but it is a commitment to be hopeful in this place."

At one point, she teared up as she described a dream she had two months ago. In it, Jacob was in a wheelchair, and she was pushing him as they fled "some bad guy."

She said Jacob turned to her in the dream and asked, "Mom, how'd you get so old?" She told him,

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"s been a really long time."

"I talk to Jacob," Wetterling said. "I really believe we're still connected."

Then she added, "I need a vacation, can you tell?"

As for the family that owns the property near where Jacob was last seen in 1989, Wetterling said she doesn't know them very well. Even with the recent developments, she said, she didn't know whether to believe anyone in the Rassier family might have been involved with Jacob's abduction.

She said she has met the parents of Daniel Rassier.

"They seem to be really nice, salt of the earth, good people," she said.

Wetterling noted that crime statistics show that a large portion of kidnappings are committed by somebody who lives close by.

"It's good reason to go back to the beginning," she said. "I think the entire state of Minnesota needs to know what happened to Jacob. Who did this?"

Thursday's activity started around 7 a.m., when about a dozen vehicles from the Stearns County Sheriff's office and the BCA drove onto Rassier property.

Sheriff John Sanner, a K-9 unit and a BCA mobile crime lab vehicle were on the scene. The dump truck and a backhoe arrived about 8:30 a.m.

Daniel Rassier and his parents drove off the property about 7:30 a.m.

In a 2008 profile of Daniel Rassier published after he had run a marathon, the St. Joseph Newsleader newspaper said he had lived in St. Joseph for all but two years in college. The article described him as "arguably one of the best trumpet players in central Minnesota."

Rassier is an elementary school band teacher and has worked for the Rocori school district since 1978, Superintendent Scott Staska said Thursday.

Staska said Rassier has been in the district for eight years and, during that time, "we've had no complaints" about Rassier. Students call him "Mr. Be-Bop," Staska said.

"You don't get nicknames like that without being well liked by the kids," he said.

Staska said he hasn't been "contacted by anyone in regard to any of the things happening now" with the search and said there is no change to the teacher's employment status.

Rassier also has been an adjunct music professor at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University since 1997, a spokeswoman said.

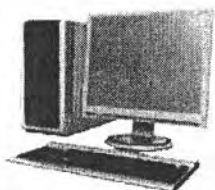
Ralph Bell, a former Newsleader editor, wrote the 2008 profile of Rassier. At the time, he said Thursday, he didn't know police had searched the family's farm previously or taken a DNA sample from Rassier.

But knowing that Rassier lived near the site of the abduction, Bell said he asked, "It must have been quite a night there for you and your parents, with all the hubbub going on?"

Bell said Rassier replied that his parents were

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verseas at the time.

"I said, 'You must have heard something?' " Bell said.  
"There were helicopters, sirens going off. He said,  
'No, I was asleep.' "

Bell said Rassier struck him as "a sweet guy, soft  
spoken, smiling" and that by recollecting the  
conversation, he wasn't trying to point his finger at  
him.

Jacob Wetterling was with his brother and a friend  
when he was abducted just a half-mile from his  
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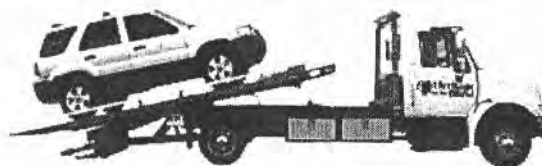
Mara H. Gottfried contributed to this report.

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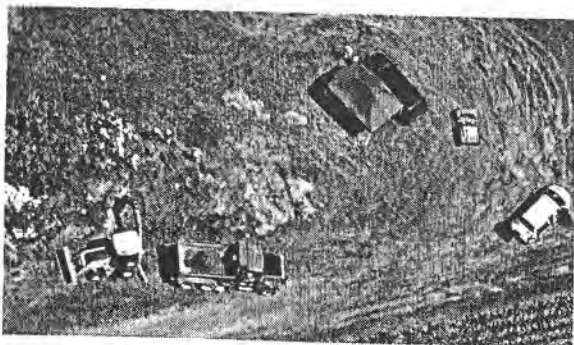
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## Several items seized in Wetterling search of St. Joseph property

By Andy Rathbun  
arathbun@pioneerpress.com

Updated: 07/02/2010 01:54:03 PM CDT



Investigators use a tractor-mounted backhoe to dig just southeast of the Rassier farm in St. Joseph, Minn. Thursday, June 1, 2010. Crews have been digging up a portion of the yard at a rural St. Joseph farm near the site where Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989. AP Photo/St. Cloud Times, Kimm Anderson) (KIMM ANDERSON)

Officials seized several items during a two-day search involving the 1989 disappearance of Jacob Wetterling, police said today.

The items — which police did not identify — will take several weeks or possibly months to be analyzed, according to the Stearns County Sheriff's Department.

Law enforcement descended with backhoes and earthmovers on the St. Joseph farm Wednesday and Thursday.

Police today publicly acknowledged the search was related to 1989 abduction of Jacob, who was 11 at the time.

Participating in the search were the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and "nationally recognized search and rescue canine handlers," the sheriff's office said in a statement.

No arrests have been made.

Also released today were court papers showing a Stearns County judge ordered four search warrants and supporting documents withheld from public view.

Releasing the documents "could cause future, related searches to be unsuccessful and could create a substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation of the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling," according to the orders signed by District Judge Vicki Landwehr.

In a statement, the Stearns County sheriff's office said: "Although this case has remained open for nearly 21 years, the commitment and determination to provide answers to the family and community never wavered."

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July 2, 2010

## Wetterling investigation moves to next phase after dig near abduction site

By Kari Petrie and David Unze

kpetrie@stcloudtimes.com, dunze@stcloudtimes.com

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[Avis=DR&Dato=20100701&Kategori=GALLERIES02&Lopenr=701001&Ref=PH">View photo gallery](http://www.sctimes.com/wetterling)

ST. JOSEPH — After so many years of waiting, another day has passed without answers.

Family members, neighbors and onlookers will have to wait some more to find out whether a two-day search of a St. Joseph Township property relates to the 1989 abduction of Jacob Wetterling.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said Thursday night that the first part of his department's investigation is over and that he would be releasing details about it this morning. Citing a long work day, he said he would not release any details Thursday night.

No arrests were made Thursday, Sanner said. When asked if an arrest was imminent, he said: "I don't know that."

The next part of the investigation will be outlined in the news release, he said.

Investigators spent much of Thursday digging at 29748-91st Ave., a farm property down the road from the Wetterling house and at the area near where Wetterling was last seen. St. Cloud Times aerial photographs show a backhoe digging up dirt about 1,000 feet from the house and putting it into a county dump truck.

The soil was taken to the Stearns County public works facility at 455-28th Ave. S. A pile of soil covered by a clear plastic tarp could be seen inside a building on that gated site.

Sanner has said a court order prevents him from saying what investigators are doing at the St. Joseph property.

Stearns County District Court Judge Vicki Landwehr approved a search warrant for the property. It's unclear whether that, or some other court order, is the order allegedly prohibiting Sanner, County Attorney Janelle Kendall and others from commenting about the search.

The St. Cloud Times has requested a copy of the court order that is being cited as prohibiting comment on the activities at the property. That request has not yet been fulfilled.

### Ongoing investigation

The location of the site raises questions because Wetterling was last seen near where the driveway meets the road.

The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier, and directory information shows that Daniel Rassier also lists that address as his residence. A man answering the phone at the residence Thursday declined to comment. Phone calls to other family members were not returned Thursday.

The sheriff's office searched the property with members of the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal



Apprehension and the FBI. FBI Spokesman E.K. Wilson said the agency had agents and resources at the scene, but wouldn't comment on what those resources are.

The digging going on less than a mile from her residence is "mind-boggling to think about," Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother, said in an interview late Thursday afternoon.

"I don't know what to think about it. I don't know what to think about anything right now. I'm just kind of numb," she said

She returned to her St. Joseph home Thursday from the St. Paul residence where she lives during the workweek. A recently broken right ankle has limited her mobility, and she plans to spend today working at the St. Joseph home. The sights she saw as she rode past the dig site brought back memories of 1989, she said.

"Just seeing all the trucks out there, the helicopters, the reporters. It's like, wow, déjà vu."

Wait continues

The news of the search sparked interest from media statewide. The search for Jacob Wetterling is among the biggest in the state's history.

A masked gunman stopped Wetterling, his brother Trevor Wetterling, 10, and friend Aaron Larson, 11, on Oct. 22, 1989, as they biked home on the quiet road from a local convenience store. The gunman let Trevor and Aaron go but disappeared with 11-year-old Jacob.

The years that followed were filled with investigators tracking thousands of leads. For the first 14 years of the investigation, authorities had focused on a vehicle that a witness reported seeing near the abduction site. The driver came forward in 2003 and was ruled out as a suspect.

Authorities decided it was likely that the abductor hadn't used a vehicle and focused on the possibility that the abductor was a local resident.

Larson said Thursday that he has been keeping up with the recent developments but is trying to keep his emotions in check.

"The big thing is not to get too up or down," he said.

Larson said he has been playing phone tag with Trevor since the news of the search began but had been exchanging Facebook messages with Trevor and Jacob's sister Amy.

Larson said over the years different leads would come in and he's learned to wait and see before getting too emotional about it.

The important thing is that law enforcement are still investigating and following leads.

"It keeps the hope alive, that's the important thing," he said.

Two people with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children also were assisting in the search, said Bob Lowery, executive director of the missing children division.

He would not comment on what work they were doing, but said generally center employees play a support role in investigations. They can provide equipment and resources or help analyze information, he said.

The Jacob Wetterling Resource Center issued a statement Thursday, saying they have not spoken to law enforcement about the investigation. They had no comment on why the investigation is being pursued or if it is connected to Jacob's abduction.

The search shows that investigators are keeping to their promise that they will do everything they can to find out what happened to her son, Patty Wetterling said. But the search brings up confusing

emotions, she said.

What might they find, and what might those findings make her feel, she wonders.

She also knows that the discovery of anything of importance at the site likely still won't bring immediate answers, as tests likely will have to be done to see if it impacts the investigation.

"I really beg for patience on everyone's part. We need solutions. We need answers. And I've always said that somebody knows something," she said. "If this jars someone's memory or causes someone to come forward" then it will be worth it.

Staff writers Danielle Cintron and Mark Sommerhauser and photo editor Dave Schwarz contributed to this report.

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July 2, 2010

## St. Joseph watches, waits for Wetterling information

By Danielle Cintron  
dcintron@stcloudtimes.com

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ST. JOSEPH — In the not-so-crowded town of St. Joseph, news vans, reporters and photographers alike clogged a half-mile stretch of 16th Avenue Southeast on Thursday.

The media and a lone officer stood on the shoulders of the narrow road watching unmarked law enforcement vehicles and a dump truck travel in and out of Robert and Rita Rassier's farm.

More than 20 years ago, investigators searched the surrounding area for Jacob Wetterling. The 11-year-old boy was abducted at gunpoint Oct. 22, 1989, near the Rassiers' driveway.

Wetterling, his brother and a friend biked home from a local store at dusk when a masked gunman stopped them. The man told two of the boys to run into the woods. The boys ran, and when they looked back the man and Jacob were gone.

The investigation into Wetterling's disappearance took on new life this week as caravans of officers and equipment began rolling onto the Rassiers' property early Wednesday.

Since then, media outlets have staked out the little town waiting to hear news of the investigation's development.

Activity along Minnesota Street and College Avenue in downtown St. Joseph on Thursday was more of the same.

Members of the media moved up and down the streets speaking to community members and those who are interested in what is happening.

"I think people are really interested in what is going on at the farm," said Gabby Volkers, 18. "While I was at work, all anyone could talk about was the investigation. Everyone is trying to find out more."

Volkers sat with a group of fellow College of St. Benedict students discussing this week's news.

"It happened 20 years ago, and now it's been rejuvenated," said Amy Mueller, 20. "I know a few people who said they wanted to drive by and see what's going on down there. This year it's just become a really big deal. I don't think they would have so much coverage unless the police had found something."

Jena Wiehoff, 18, grew up in St. Joseph and said she remembers her parents being much more restrictive of her while growing up.

"I think this case has a lot to do with my parents keeping a close eye on me," Wiehoff said. "They gave me restrictions on where I could bike and who could be with me. I just want to know what set the police off. This time there's just so much hype."

While the town has been flooded by the media, the St. Joseph Catholic Church has been preparing for its annual Fourth of July parish festival and the Joetown Rocks concert that precedes it.

"Everything had been on schedule until yesterday," said Lloyd Bruemmer, a parishioner of the church who has worked the festival's Joeburger stand for years. "We were storing our supplies out on the Rassier farm, and now we can't get to anything. We have to get special permission to get our stuff."

Bruemmer said the elders of the parish had been talking to the FBI to try to get to the supplies for the festival.

"The investigation has really hampered our setup time," Bruemmer said. "I just really hope they'll finish up today so we can get to everything."

Sandy Scholz, the church's business manager, said church leaders were working in cooperation with law enforcement to get to the festival supplies.

"We've been respectful of what they are doing," Scholz said of law enforcement's work. "It's unfortunate, and we're keeping the families in our prayers."

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## DNA could be key element in revived Wetterling case

By ANTHONY LONETREE, Star Tribune

Last update: July 2, 2010 - 6:20 AM

To investigators aiming to crack decades-old cold cases, few tools are as powerful as DNA evidence, the so-called "gold standard" of forensic science, authorities say.

As the search continued Thursday at the farm where Jacob Wetterling was last seen, observers said advances in DNA technology make it possible for investigative riches to still be found -- even in a 1989 abduction case.

They say the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension also has the rare ability among law enforcement agencies nationally to unlock DNA potential in bone fragments and other scant or degraded evidence.

There, on the third floor of BCA headquarters in St. Paul, behind double security doors, is a lab opened in 2005 to conduct mitochondrial DNA testing -- the same technique used on mummies, mammoths and Neanderthals.

St. Paul police Senior Cmdr. Tim Lynch, who has overseen his department's cold-case investigations, said St. Paul police relied on the lab to confirm from a bone sample the identity of a woman whose body was found in a car pulled from the Mississippi River.

Authorities turn to mitochondrial DNA when traditional nuclear DNA -- commonly drawn from blood, semen or skin -- is unavailable. The new technology, dating to about 2000, can create usable evidence out of bone fragments, teeth, strands of hair -- even fingernails, said Dixie Peters, a technical leader at the Center for Human Identification at the University of North Texas Health Science Center.

Peters said Thursday that the technology is so new that even if bones had been uncovered in an investigation 20 years ago, they probably would have ended up in "some law enforcement agency's closet."

At St. Paul police headquarters, Sgt. Anita Muldoon said she was not privy to any inside details on a revived Wetterling investigation. But, as her department's lead cold-case investigator, she said she is fascinated by the news.

"It gets me excited," she said. "I want to be up

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## New search stirs hopes, fears: What happened to Jacob?

Authorities returned Thursday morning to continue searching a property near where the 11-year-old boy was taken by a masked man in 1989.

By **ABBY SIMONS, JAMES WALSH** and **RICHARD MERYHEW**, Star Tribune staff writers

Last update: July 2, 2010 - 8:08 AM

ST. JOSEPH, MINN. -- He came to her in a dream only a few months ago. Jacob Wetterling was in a wheelchair and looked up at his mother as she struggled to help him escape a pursuer. "I hadn't seen him all these years," Patty Wetterling said softly, fighting back tears. "And he looked up and said 'Mom, how'd you get so old?'" Wetterling shared the memory Thursday morning at her home in St. Joseph, a half-mile down the road from the spot where her oldest boy, 11-year-old Jacob, was abducted and last seen in October 1989.

Near that spot almost 21 years later, backhoes unearthed chunks of grass and dirt from a farm property in hopes of finding clues to a mystery that has haunted the

Wetterling family, stumped authorities and gripped a state and region for a generation.

Several dozen local and state law enforcement officers, with help from the FBI, descended unexpectedly on the property Wednesday morning with cadaver dogs, backhoes and trucks. By Thursday night, they'd completed their work, hauling out six dump-truck loads of dirt. Yet they gave no indication whether they'd found anything that might lead them to Jacob or an arrest.

Still, the intensity of the work -- involving as many as 17 cars or trucks on Wednesday -- transfixed a state and raised hopes that maybe, just maybe, investigators might hit on something. Within hours of the first cars arriving Wednesday, news crews from St. Cloud to the Twin Cities moved in, hoping to catch a glimpse of the action. Twitter came alive with it. Hundreds of thousands of Minnesotans rushed online to check for updates.

Driving past the scene Thursday morning, even Patty Wetterling was awed. "Overwhelming," she said.

After more than 20 years, people still cared. After more than 20 years, there remained hope that somehow, some way, she and the

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rest of the world might finally find out what happened to the boy who was abducted by a masked gunman on the way home from a convenience store in the dark of an October night.

"It gave me a sense of the magnitude of what they're doing," she added. "It's frightening and inspiring."

For the second day in a row, Stearns County authorities declined to comment about the case, saying a court order issued this week barred them from speaking.

One law enforcement official with knowledge of the investigation described the continuing search efforts as "a shot in the dark."

Earlier, another official said the search was initiated by the work of two young agents who, after taking a fresh look at the case file, said, "Maybe we should go take a look."

The official said no new tips sparked the search, adding that the investigators were simply working off a hunch.

Wetterling said she knew the search was coming; she just didn't know when.

Still, as she drove by the scene, she found

herself battling mixed emotions.

"I don't know what to think, and what do I want?" she said. "Do I hope they find something? I'm not sure. Do I hope they don't find something? That's not good either."

"Until we know, we don't know, so we have to look far and wide."

## Another look

The farm searched this week is familiar to investigators.


Jacob was abducted the night of Oct. 22, 1989, on the dirt road running past the farmhouse driveway as he headed home with his brother, Trevor, 10, and best friend, Aaron Larson, 11.

In the following days, investigators combed the property and surrounding fields and woods looking for the boy, a footprint, a piece of his clothing.

As years passed and investigative techniques and technology improved, law enforcement officials returned more than once.

Six years ago, while reexamining a theory that Jacob was kidnapped by someone on foot,

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investigators went to the farmhouse to question a middle-aged man who lives there with his elderly parents.

On the night of the abduction the man was home alone.

Police obtained DNA samples from the man in 2004, according to a relative, and sent him a handwritten letter from Patty Wetterling, pleading with anyone with information to come forward.

The man, now 54, still lives in the farmhouse with his parents, now in their 80s. The house, a barn and many outbuildings are hidden from view from the main road by a thick wall of trees.

Wetterling said she does not know the family well but said they were churchgoing and "salt of the earth."

"Next to having a missing child, the next worst thing would be [being] the parent of somebody who did this crime," she said. "Maybe this can offer some peace from all of that, too."

## Dirty work

Thursday's work began about 6 a.m. when

about a dozen vehicles, including crime scene trucks from the FBI and state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and SUVs carrying police dogs, pulled into the farm.

At 7:30 a.m., the previously questioned 54-year-old man drove away from the site with his father and mother in the car.

About an hour later, a county backhoe and a dump truck pulled onto the property. Over the next eight hours the dump truck hauled loads of dirt away from the farm.

Aerial photos showed investigators digging near a single tree or bush far behind the house.

One law enforcement official with knowledge of the case said investigators did not search the house. He also said that, to his knowledge, they found nothing of interest on the property.

Shortly after 6 p.m., the caravan of investigators filed off the property. The last to leave was Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner, who drove away without saying a word.

A Stearns County patrol supervisor told the news media, "We've been cleared."

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## Items seized in search by Wetterling investigators

Analysis of items taken from St. Joseph, Minn., farm near where Jacob Wetterling was abducted could take weeks.

By ABBY SIMONS, Star Tribune

Last update: July 2, 2010 - 11:24 PM

ST. CLOUD -- A number of items were seized from the Stearns County farm where investigators have been turning over ground in the investigation into the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling in 1989, the Sheriff's Office said Friday.

Authorities did not reveal what those items were, but said in a statement that they would be subjected to "additional processing and/or analysis, which could take several weeks to possibly months to complete."

The statement is also the first on-the-record confirmation that the dozens of investigators and earth-moving equipment on the St. Joseph farm were there as part of the long-running effort to solve the case.

The Sheriff's Office also released a judge's ruling on the withholding of search warrants relating to the two days of searching on the farm.

Judge Vicki Landwehr said disclosure of the documents at this time "could cause future related searches to be unsuccessful and could create a substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation."

The warrants are not filed but are held by a representative of the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

For hour upon hour Wednesday and Thursday, near where Jacob was nabbed almost 21 years ago, backhoes unearthed chunks of grass and dirt from the in hopes of finding clues to a mystery that has gripped a state and region for a generation.

Dozens of local and state law enforcement officers, with help from the FBI, descended unexpectedly on the property Wednesday morning with cadaver dogs, backhoes and trucks. By Thursday night, they had completed their work, hauling out six dump-truck loads of dirt.

In 2004, authorities began questioning a man who lives at the farm and obtained DNA

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samples from him, according to a relative who spoke with the Star Tribune at that time. The man, now 54, lives with his parents, both in their 80s.

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The family living at the farm told KSTP-TV that the truckloads of what appeared to be dirt removed from their property contained mostly ash. The ash, they say, is from the wood-burning boiler that heats the farm.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner told the St. Cloud Times that the 54-year-old family member is a "person of interest" in Wetterling's disappearance.


The Times reported Friday that investigators have interviewed him "numerous times" about the abduction. The man told the Times that he also has submitted to a lie-detector test and hypnosis.

I had absolutely nothing to do with anything with Jacob," the man told the Times. "I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

Sanner said the man has submitted to several tests but couldn't recall the specifics.

The man said he believes investigators came back to his property this week because of new canine resources. He said he supports

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## Wetterling case 'person of interest' ID'd

### Staff and wire reports

Updated: 07/03/2010 10:42:53 AM CDT

The Stearns County sheriff said Friday that a 54-year-old resident of St. Joseph is a "person of interest" in the 21-year-old disappearance case of Jacob Wetterling.

Sheriff John Sanner told the St. Cloud Times that investigators developed probable cause in recent weeks that led to the search of the farm where Daniel A. Rassier lives with his parents.

Rassier said he believes investigators came to his property because of new canine resources, and he said he would do what he could to help. No arrests have been made.

Investigators seized several items this week during a two-day search involving the 1989 disappearance of Jacob Wetterling.

The items, which police did not identify, could take several weeks or possibly months to analyze, according to the Stearns County sheriff's office.

Law enforcement descended with backhoes and earthmovers on a 158-acre St. Joseph farm Wednesday and Thursday.

Police on Friday publicly acknowledged the search was related to the 1989 abduction of Jacob, who was 11 at the time.

Participating in the search were the Minnesota

Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, Federal Bureau of Investigation, National Center for Missing and Exploited Children and "nationally recognized search- and-rescue canine handlers," the sheriff's office said in a statement.

Also released Friday were court papers showing that a Stearns County judge ordered four search warrants and supporting documents withheld from public view.

### Releasing

the documents "could cause future, related searches to be unsuccessful and could create a substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation of the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling," according to the orders signed by District Judge Vicki Landwehr.

In a statement, the Stearns County sheriff's office said: "Although this case has remained open for nearly 21 years, the commitment and determination to provide answers to the family and community never wavered."

Jacob was riding his bicycle with his brother and a friend on Oct. 22, 1989, when they were approached by a masked gunman who told the boys to stop and lie on their stomachs in a ditch. He ordered the other two boys to run away, and Jacob has been missing ever since.

There have been no arrests, and officials have cleared more than 40,000 leads over the years.

After the kidnapping in the town, about 80 miles northwest of the Twin Cities, Jacob's mother, Patty, became an advocate for missing children and helped pass federal and state laws to track sex

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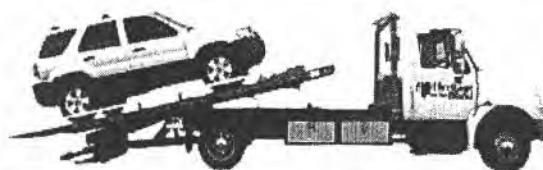
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Wetterling and alert the public when children go missing. In 1990, she and Jacob's father, Jerry, founded what's now known as the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center.

"It has been my experience that these things take a long time," Patty Wetterling said. "You wait and see — and you hope. We hope we get some answers."

The property being searched is owned by Robert Rassier and his wife, Rita, who are in their 80s. The home also is listed as the address of their son Daniel.

A woman who answered the phone at the house Friday said that this is a hard time for the family and that there would be no comment.

Andy Rathbun contributed to this story.

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July 3, 2010

## Sheriff: Rassier 'person of interest' in Wetterling case

Man says he will do what he can to help investigators

By Kari Petrie and David Unze

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A two-day search of a St. Joseph Township property has breathed new life into the Jacob Wetterling abduction investigation, and a man who lives at the farm said Friday he will do what he can to help authorities.

And on the same day Dan Rassier said he supported a search of his family's farm, Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said Rassier is a "person of interest" in Wetterling's disappearance.

The search this week at 29748-91st Ave. in St. Joseph Township was one of many done during the nearly 21-year investigation, Rassier said.

The Stearns County Sheriff's Office issued a release Friday saying it seized "a number of items" during the search.

Those items need to be processed and analyzed, which could take several weeks or months to complete. No arrests have been made.

Wetterling was abducted Oct. 22, 1989, when a masked gunman stopped him, his brother and a friend as they returned home from a convenience store.

Wetterling's brother and friend were let go by the man who took Wetterling.

The abduction happened at the end of the driveway to the property owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. Dan Rassier, 54, lives there with his parents. He also was living at the house at the time of the abduction.

He is a teacher in the Rocori school district.

Dan Rassier said Friday in a phone interview with the Times that investigators have interviewed him "numerous times" about Wetterling's disappearance. He said he has submitted to a lie-detector test, hypnosis and DNA sampling. Sanner also said Friday that Rassier has submitted to several tests, but he couldn't recall specifics.

Rassier said media attention has focused on him and put him in a negative light. He has received death threats and threatening e-mails, which he has reported to authorities, he said.

"I had absolutely nothing to do with anything with Jacob," Rassier said. "I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

Rassier said he believes investigators came back to his property this week because of new canine resources. He said he supports any effort to do a search in a new and better way.

"I'm all for it," he said.

Rassier says he is cooperating with authorities and has plans to meet with them in the future. Rassier is concerned mainly with how the attention is affecting his family.

"For over 20 years, we have experienced our own never-ending nightmare," he said. "We realize that it's nothing like what the Wetterlings have gone through."

Patty Wetterling said Friday that she was "exhausted" from the events of the week, but that she gained strength from what investigators were doing.

"The big message is that the sheriff's department proved that you never give up on our children," she said. "That's huge. They put resources and energy and time and skill into this, and it's very strengthening to me."

#### Investigation

Sanner said in an interview Friday that four search warrants have been executed "at or near" the Rassier home. His office released four court orders — one for each warrant — that free investigators from their obligation to file the executed search warrants in court, which would make them public documents.

Filing of the executed search warrants and accompanying inventories of what investigators took from the Rassier property "could cause future related searches to be unsuccessful and could create substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation of the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling," according to the orders signed by Stearns County District Court Judge Vicki Landwehr.

She signed one order Monday, two on Tuesday and a fourth on Thursday. The orders indicate the warrants and inventory of what was taken during the search will be retained by Bureau of Criminal Apprehension Special Agent Ken McDonald and aren't required to be filed in court unless criminal charges are filed or unless a judge directs him to file them.

McDonald declined to comment Friday.

Rm/75



University Chronicle &gt; News

## Questions remain after second day of investigations

By Emilie Thiessen  
News Editor

Over 20 years since the unsolved abduction of then-11-year-old Jacob Wetterling, the case was brought to life once again as local authorities along with the FBI launched a two-day investigation at a farm near the Wetterling home near St. Joseph earlier this week.



Though Stearns County Police have not officially linked the investigation with Jacob Wetterling's disappearance, the site of the investigation was near the site Jacob Wetterling was taken.

Large digging equipment and dump trucks were seen traveling to and from the farm throughout the day though no information was released as to why authorities would need to dig. Many residents said they felt optimistic about the recent developments saying any movement is progress.

"It is encouraging to hear any new developments," Matt Trombley, Director of St. Cloud State University CSOLD said. "It really is an amazing thing to see that leads are still being generated."

"I am encouraged to think that maybe they will find a way to give some closure to what happened or what is happening to Jacob at this point in time."

Trombley said he likes to stay positive, hoping for a good outcome, but knowing the truth is the ultimate goal.

"I think we always hope for something amazing to happen, that he might still be found, then beyond that I think we hope for the truth."

Patty Wetterling, Jacob's mother, returned to her home on Thursday and said she was amazed that so many people continued to show great interest in the case. Patty Wetterling also said that the last couple days had been very emotionally taxing for her.

"I am just kind of confused," Wetterling said. "I don't know what to feel or what to think at this point. We have been searching for answers, [but] do I hope they find something or not?"

Patty Wetterling said the pain of knowing exactly what happened to Jacob could be quite difficult but the urge to uncover the truth is undeniable.

"But I do want answers. At the end of the day I want to know what happened," Wetterling said.

The Rassier family, including parents Robert and Rita and their adult son Dan, live on the farm in question though they have not been named suspects. Patty Wetterling made it clear that if the family was involved in any way, she would like to

know.

"Certainly, if anyone there [at the farm] was involved," she said. "I hope they find out and if they weren't I hope it can offer this family some peace and they can move on as well."

Patty Wetterling was not notified beforehand about the search but she said she believes that is the safe way to conduct an investigation.

"I respect that," she said. "You just can't share that kind of information. I think they would have told me something if it would have been needed or helpful but I don't need to know what they are doing. I just need to know that they continue to try and that they are working hard."

Work on the farm ended late Thursday evening still with no official statement from authorities.

Multiple calls made in an effort to speak with local police were left unanswered.

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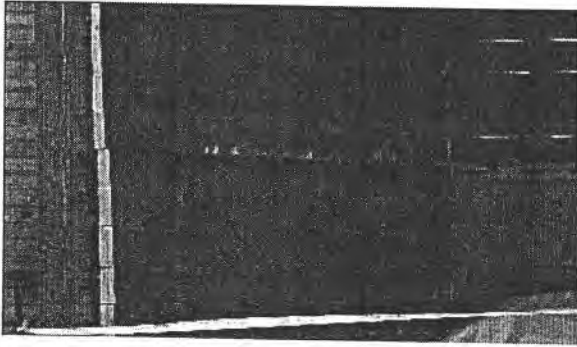
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## In the search for Jacob, another shot in the dark



Sennott, Richard, Star Tribune

For two days, backhoes did the digging and then trucks carted the dirt and possible evidence to the Stearns County public works building. The search took place on a St. Joseph farm about a half mile from the Wetterling home and near where Jacob was abducted in 1989.

Two days of excavating on land near where the 11-year-old was taken comes six years after the property was last targeted.

By **RICHARD MERYHEW** and **ABBY SIMONS**, Star Tribune

Last update: July 4, 2010 - 7:36 AM

ST. JOSEPH, MINN. - The cops, trucks and

backhoes are gone, and the dirt has been hauled away.

But in the aftermath of a surprise two-day search on farmland near the spot where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted in October 1989 and never seen again, the public's thirst for answers continues about an investigation long shadowed by mystery and controversy.

Stearns County authorities said little all week, citing a judge's order prohibiting them from discussing the latest detective work. A statement issued by the Sheriff's Office after the work was completed also gave few details other than the obvious: The search was part of the long-running effort to find out what happened to the boy, whose disappearance has riveted Minnesotans for a generation. But in many ways, what played out last week alongside a pastoral country road a half-mile from the Wetterling home was a rerun of police legwork in 2004. And the reasons investigators returned are much the same.

"Some of this is just looking at this with a fresh set of eyes," Sheriff John Sanner said in a 2004 interview with the Star Tribune. "We're looking at people we've talked to already and retracing some of our steps."

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Authorities said in their statement last week that they seized a "number of items" from the property, but didn't provide details.

The Sheriff's Office also released a judge's ruling authorizing investigators to withhold search warrants and related documents. The warrants are in possession of the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension.

Judge Vicki Landwehr said their disclosure now "could cause future related searches to be unsuccessful and could create a substantial risk of severely hampering this ongoing investigation."

## Tire tracks explained

Sanner could not be reached for comment this weekend.

But in a lengthy 2004 interview, the sheriff explained some of the reasons investigators took another look at the farm and at a man who lived there.

Until then, they spent a lot of time and energy focusing on a suspicious tire track at the end of the dirt driveway near the spot where Jacob was taken.

For years, they pursued leads on vehicles

and issued alerts for a variety of cars, even though Jacob's brother, Trevor, 10, and best friend, Aaron Larson, 11, who were with him when he was snatched, never said they saw or heard a vehicle.

None of the tips led to a prime suspect or an arrest.

In late 2003, after Sanner became sheriff, the focus changed when a man claiming to be the motorist responsible for the tire track came forward after having a casual conversation with a U.S. marshal who was a friend of a friend.


He said that on the night of the kidnapping, he heard the police reports on a scanner. Curious, he drove to the site and saw the boys' bikes on the ground. He got there so quickly that he beat some of the police to the scene.

He said he mentioned seeing the bikes to a St. Joseph police officer, then left.

Sanner said in 2004 that investigative records showed no sign that the man, who is not considered a suspect, had ever been interviewed.

That twist, on top of years of dead-end leads

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and tips to nowhere, fueled criticism and second-guessing of an investigation that, from the start, was complicated.

Dozens of local, county and state officers moved into the small prairie town about 75 miles northwest of the Twin Cities within hours of Jacob's disappearance, along with the FBI. In the rush to comb the woods and fields, egos clashed, and some details were missed.

"There have been so many peaks and valleys with this thing, it's unbelievable," Sanner said in 2004.

But, he added, "we're not second-guessing" anybody or the initial work that was done.

BCA agent Dennis Sigafos, assigned to the case in 1989, said in a 2004 interview that, "My deal has always been, start in the neighborhood and stay in the neighborhood ... unless something takes you out of the neighborhood. If there was no car, then obviously we should have been in there even harder. ... Maybe a hell of a lot more could have been done. But I can assure you we talked to people and talked to people and talked to people. In my heart, I believe we did both equally well -- inside the neighborhood and outside."

## A person of interest

When the driver who made the tire track came forward and took the focus off the search for a car, authorities decided to take another run at the possibility that the kidnapper was on foot.

At the time, Sanner said the investigation had been "refocused to examine potential local suspects."


The closest residence to the kidnapping was the farmhouse, which is owned by two retired farmers who live there with a middle-aged son.

The night of the abduction, the son, now 54, was home alone, his parents out of town. A relative told the Star Tribune in 2004 that the man, said by some investigators to be on a short list of potential suspects, even called authorities that night to report a suspicious car turning around in his driveway.

While the man was questioned in 1989, several investigators have said over the years that his answers always left them "uncomfortable."

In 2004, investigators obtained DNA samples

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from the man. At some point, he also agreed to be hypnotized and take a lie detector test.

In an appeal to his emotions, authorities even sent him a handwritten letter from Patty Wetterling, in which she pleaded that anyone with information should come forward.

None of it led to a break.

## Working a hunch

Publicly, the investigation seemed relatively quiet in recent months -- until last Wednesday, when authorities returned to the farm, this time with cadaver dogs, trucks and backhoes.

Sanner's office gave no immediate explanation.

But others close to the investigation said there was nothing "hot and heavy" that prompted the search -- no tip about buried bones, no confession or clue to trigger new digging.

Rather, one official said, two young agents looking at the case file thought it was worth taking a fresh look at a few spots on the property.

The official described the work as "a hunch." Another said it was "a shot in the dark."

When the work ended Thursday, about a half dozen truckloads of dirt had been taken to a nearby public works garage.

A source close to the investigation said the soil will be sifted by investigators looking for bones or bone fragments that could be tested by forensic experts.

In its statement, Stearns County said the processing and analysis of evidence "could take several weeks and possibly months to complete."

By Friday, the well-manicured farm showed no sign that it had been the site of an intensive search.

A man who answered the phone at the house late in the day refused to identify himself but expressed, during a rambling five-minute conversation, great irritation with the media scrutiny. The man's mother said Saturday, "We have nothing to say."

Sanner told the St. Cloud Times on Friday that the son of the farm owner was "a person of interest." The son told the Times that he has been questioned by investigators many

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times, but had nothing to do with Jacob's disappearance.

"I didn't do it," he said.

He told the newspaper that he believed police searched there again because they had new canine resources. He also said he'd do what he could to help.

At the Wetterling home, the family is left to wait awhile longer for word on whether there is any new evidence of Jacob's fate.

"Who did this? What happened? ... We need answers," Patty Wetterling said late last week as the search finished up. "Nobody's quitting, and we're not giving up until we find Jacob."

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July 4, 2010

## St. Joseph reflects on renewed search for Wetterling

By Danielle Cintron  
dcintron@stcloudtimes.com

ST. JOSEPH — Hundreds of St. Joseph Catholic Church parishioners gathered outside to celebrate an outdoor Mass before the annual Joetown Rocks festival kicked off Saturday. Included in the congregation's prayers was Jacob Wetterling, the 11-year-old boy who was abducted at gunpoint Oct. 22, 1989.

It was a reminder of the strain the community has felt in recent days as investigators searched a farm near the abduction site and not far from Wetterling's home. The two-day search thrust the town of St. Joseph back into the national spotlight.

The search took place at 29748-91st Ave., where Robert and Rita Rassier live with their son, Dan. Dan Rassier has been named a "person of interest" in Wetterling's disappearance.

Community members at Saturday's festival were respectful of the families involved, and many wished not to comment on the renewed investigation.

"For Jacob Wetterling and all missing children. For healing, understanding and a sense of closure for the St. Joseph community, we pray," a reader said at the open Mass during the prayers of the faithful.

Cindy Kissner, St. Cloud, attended the Joetown Rocks event and expressed her desire to know why the Rassier property was being investigated now.

"Why couldn't they do that when it all happened?" Kissner said. "I just hope they find something out so the families can have closure."

Stearns County authorities said no additional work or patrols were conducted at the site Saturday.

A small "No Trespassing" sign has been posted at the Rassier driveway since the search concluded Friday.

Times reporter TaLeiza Calloway contributed to this report.



Las Vegas Sun

# Dig revives 21-year-old Minnesota abduction case

The Associated Press

Sunday, July 4, 2010 | 12:15 a.m.

Nearly 21 years after an 11-year-old boy was abducted on a familiar central Minnesota road, authorities acknowledged Friday there is new activity in the case, after investigators spent two days searching and digging at a farm near where Jacob Wetterling was last seen.

The Stearns County Sheriff's Department said Friday they had seized several items during their search of the 158-acre property in St. Joseph and confirmed that the search was related to Jacob's disappearance, which drew national attention and led to state and federal sex offender registration laws.

Authorities did not describe the items seized or release any additional details. The department said in a statement that analysis of the items could take weeks or months.

Jacob was riding his bicycle with his brother and a friend on Oct. 22, 1989 when they were approached by a masked gunman who told the boys to stop and lay on their stomachs in a ditch. He ordered the other two boys to run away, and Jacob has been missing ever since.

There have been no arrests and authorities have cleared more than 40,000 leads over the years.

Jacob was abducted along the road at the end of the driveway to the property that was searched. The farm is owned by Robert Rassier and his wife, Rita, who are both in their 80s. Their son, Daniel Rassier, also lives there and was home the night of the abduction. A woman who answered the phone at the house Friday said no one would comment. Another message left by The Associated Press was not returned.

But Daniel Rassier, 54, told the St. Cloud Times that investigators have interviewed him "numerous times" about Jacob's disappearance, and that he has submitted to a lie-detector test, hypnosis and DNA sampling.

"I had absolutely nothing to do with anything with Jacob," he told the newspaper. "I didn't do it. I had nothing to do with it."

Sheriff John Sanner told the Times that Daniel Rassier is a "person of interest" in Jacob's disappearance.

Rassier said he believes investigators came to his property because of new canine resources, and he'll do what he can to help. Sanner told the newspaper that investigators developed probable cause in recent weeks that led to the search, although he would not elaborate.

Sanner did not return a phone message left by the AP.

Officials from the sheriff's office, the FBI, the state Bureau of Criminal Apprehension, K-9 handlers, and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children converged on the Rassier property Wednesday. By Thursday, earthmoving equipment began digging, and truck loads of what appeared to be dirt were hauled away.

Officials said they couldn't release additional details of their investigation.

Court orders by Stearns County District Judge Vicki Landwehr said four separate search warrants would not be made available to the public at this time because their release could hamper the investigation.

There have been no arrests connected to the search, which wrapped up Thursday.

After the kidnapping in the town about 80 miles northwest of Minneapolis, Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling,

became an advocate for missing children and helped pass federal and state laws to track sex offenders and alert the public when children go missing. In 1990, she and Jacob's father, Jerry Wetterling, founded what's now known as the Jacob Wetterling Resource Center.

Patty Wetterling said Friday that the sheriff shared the news with her the night before, but didn't answer any questions or say anything beyond what he told the media.

"They can't. So we know as much as you know," she said. "I didn't really ask a lot of questions. I was grateful for the heads up."

"It's been my experience that these things take a long time," she added. "You wait and see \_ and you hope. We hope we get some answers."

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July 5, 2010

## St. Joseph crowds delight in parade, festival fun

By Mark Sommerhauser  
msommerhauser@stcloudtimes.com

ST. JOSEPH — Residents here continued a July Fourth pastime while hoping to end another rite that dates back more than two decades: Waiting for closure to the unsolved abduction of Jacob Wetterling.

The Church of St. Joseph Parish Festival brings a crowd to St. Joseph every year. This year it came with St. Joseph in the media spotlight, after authorities renewed the search for Wetterling by combing for clues near where he disappeared in 1989.

Authorities on Friday named a man who lives at the property they searched, Dan Rassier, a "person of interest" in the case.

They hauled dirt from the property and seized some items last week, but they didn't say if a development in the case triggered their search, what they were looking for or what they found.

Still, the news gave some in St. Joseph cause to believe a break is coming in the Wetterling case — and that their town will no longer be linked to unresolved tragedy.

For Ann Lauer, a member of St. Joseph's Parish, last week stirred memories of the terror that shook St. Joseph the night Wetterling was abducted.

Lauer and other festivalgoers also voiced concern for Wetterling's family and for Robert, Rita and Dan Rassier, the family whose property was searched.

"I just hope they get this settled... for the families' sakes," Lauer said.

Coincidence linked the parish festival to the Wetterling search, as many of the tents and benches used for the festival had been stored at the Rassier property. Authorities had restricted access to the site, creating a headache for festival organizers.

Despite all the media attention on the Wetterling case, not everyone in St. Joseph on Sunday was focused on it. Festivalgoers enjoyed the usual summertime fun: Some played bingo, others bid for quilts in a fundraising auction and some listened to live country music while scarfing down Joeburgers.

Sarah Behrend of Sauk Rapids and her granddaughter, 7-year-old Shelby Gabrielson, sat on Minnesota Street on Sunday morning watching the festival parade. Gabrielson collected candy from the parade, red-white-and-blue ribbons bouncing in her hair. Behrend spoke of the July Fourth tradition of bringing her children — and now her grandchildren — to St. Joseph each year for the parade.

"The kids love the candy," Behrend said. "They have a good time."

# Newsleaders

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'Person of interest' says he witnessed 'things'

by Dennis Dalman

Thursday, July 8, 2010 3:20 PM EDT

On the late autumn day of the evening Jacob Wetterling was abducted, a nearby neighbor, Dan Rassier, said he "witnessed" many peculiar things in the area southeast of St. Joseph.

The day was Sunday, Oct. 22, 1989.

Next day, once Rassier became aware of Jacob's abduction, the "things" he saw coalesced in his mind as vital connections pointing the way to solving the crime.

Rassier spoke of his frustration in a lengthy July 3 telephone interview with the St. Joseph Newsleader. He is frustrated, he said, because nobody has followed through with the information he so willingly shared about the "things" he saw that day. Rassier, citing "trust issues" with the media, declined to divulge the kinds of things he saw, although, when questioned further, he did more or less agree those "things" were people and/or vehicles. Rassier said he spent a good part of that day jogging on the road past the Delwin Ballroom, where a polka fest was taking place, and on his neighborhood roads, including the one on which Jacob was abducted, just before darkness fell. Jacob was taken on that road (91st Avenue) right at the spot where it intersects with the long driveway to the Robert and Rita Rassier farm.

Rassier said he "witnessed" things throughout that entire day and into the early evening. When he was not jogging, he spent all of the time at home Oct. 22. At that time - as now - Rassier has lived with his parents.

Another reason Rassier cited for not divulging details about the things he saw is because he does not want to tip off anyone guilty of the abduction.

"I am an innocent witness to what happened," he said. "But I definitely saw something. All of the investigators know the information I told them."

Rassier has a vivid memory of that autumn day of two decades ago when 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling, his brother and a friend had gone to the Tom Thumb convenience store to get some treats and a video. While returning home on the rural township road, a masked gunman stopped the boys. He told the brother and the friend to run into the woods. When the boys looked back from the woods, Jacob and the man were gone.

From the beginning, Dan Rassier was one of many people questioned by law enforcement.

"I was completely cooperative with them," Rassier said. "They gave me all kinds of tests, including a lie-detector test. I told them about what I'd witnessed."

Now, 20 years later, Rassier is yet again a "person of interest" by law enforcement. Last week, a variety of law-enforcement agencies, including the F.B.I., converged in force on the Rassier farm, confiscating some unspecified items and digging up earth from a gravel bed and then trucking it from the farm. Authorities have been tight-lipped about the reason for the raid and about confiscated items, saying only that the search of the farm was precipitated by a court order.

Rassier vigorously denies having anything to do with the disappearance of Jacob Wetterling.

"Yes, this is very tough," Rassier said. "It's a nightmare, but it's nothing next to losing a son (Jacob). I've been getting a lot of death threats. I can handle this, but what worries me is my parents. It's so hard on them. They (media) are saying horrible things about us. They are ruining our lives."

On a bright side, Rassier noted, he and his parents are receiving a lot of cards, letters and calls of support and sympathy from friends, relatives and well-wishers.

Rassier, 54, is a music-band teacher for the Cold Spring/Rocori School District. He is also an avid runner who has participated in countless marathons during the past few decades.

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## Authorities: Wetterling Case Will Take Months

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (WCCO) — It's been nearly two weeks since one of the most well-known kidnapping cases in Minnesota was back in the spotlight, but investigators say it'll be another several months until forensic analysis is completed.

The Stearns County Sheriff estimates it could be three to four months, conservatively, until they could be done sifting through the dirt and ashes that authorities, including the BCA, seized from a St. Joseph, Minn. property.

For two days, investigators searched the farm site near the spot where Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989, which is a half mile from Wetterling's home.

A backhoe produced six loads of dirt and ash that was hauled away for forensic analysis.

Back in 1989, a police dog picked up Wetterling's scent just inside the property and sources say it disappeared a couple hundred feet away. Sources also say a mold was made of his footprint on the site back then.

The Stearns County Sheriff told the St. Cloud Times one of the residents of the farm, Daniel Rassier, is a "person of interest" in the case. His family told WCCO he had nothing to do with Jacob's disappearance.



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A dump truck enters the area where investigators are searching in St. Joseph, Minn. on July 1, 2010.  
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## Wetterling searchers hit another dead end

By Amy Forliti  
Associated Press

Updated: 09/28/2010 11:54:08 PM CDT

Forensic tests on items taken this summer from a Minnesota farm near the site of 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling's abduction in 1989 have revealed no evidence linking them to the crime, the Stearns County sheriff said Tuesday.

Sheriff John Sanner said various tests "were unable to establish, distinguish or identify potential evidence." He said further analysis was scheduled for some items and said more tests are possible, but declined to elaborate or provide any details on what tests had been done so far. His statement called the results preliminary.

"We're hopeful that the test results will lead us in one direction or another," he said.

A masked gunman kidnapped Jacob on Oct. 22, 1989, on a rural road in St. Joseph, about 80 miles northwest of the Twin Cities. He hasn't been seen since. Authorities have examined more than 50,000 leads, but no one was ever arrested.

Interest in the case was renewed this summer when authorities converged on the 158-acre property near the abduction site and hauled away truckloads of dirt and other items.

At the time, Sanner told the St. Cloud Times that Daniel Rassier, a man who lived at the farm with his parents, was a person of interest in the case.

Rassier, 54, has told the Associated Press he had nothing to do with it.

"It's a bit of a relief, even though it doesn't answer too many questions," Rassier told the AP on Tuesday. "But it does answer the idea that Jacob could be alive and well somewhere out there. ...

There's the hope, we all have the hope that he is out there."

Rassier said among the items taken in the search was a box of newspaper clippings about Jacob's abduction and excerpts of Rassier's journal with his thoughts about the case.

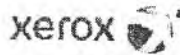
"I would not expect to get those back for a while," Rassier said.

Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, told the St. Cloud Times that she's grateful to everyone who put energy into finding what was at the site.

"But today's like any other day, we still

don't have any answers," she said.



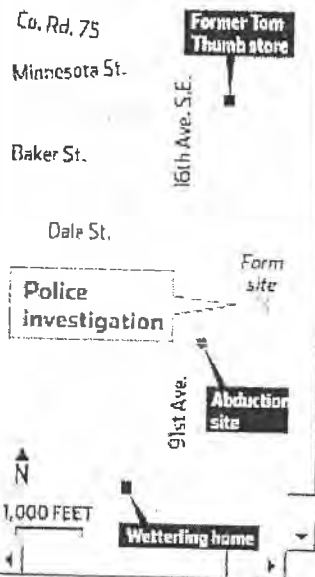
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## So close to home

Jacob Wetterling was abducted near the Rassier farm while biking home from a Tom Thumb convenience store in 1989. A June 30 search of the farm turned up no evidence in the case.



She waits for answers. "And you do what you can to build a better world for kids in the meantime," she said. "That's what we do."

Jacob was abducted after he, his 10-year-old brother, Trevor, and his 11-year-old friend Aaron

Larson rode their bikes and a scooter to a nearby convenience store to rent a movie.

The boys were riding the familiar road home before 9:30 p.m. and were about a half-mile from the Wetterling house, and near the end of the Rassiers' driveway, when the gunman told them to stop and lie on their stomachs in a ditch. The man asked the boys their ages and ordered Aaron and Trevor to run away or he'd shoot.

The boys ran, and when they looked back, Jacob was gone.

In the days that followed, hundreds of police and volunteers searched on foot and horseback for the boy. More than 300 National Guard troops and Department of Natural Resources workers made shoulder-to-shoulder searches of woods and fields. Rewards totaling \$125,000 were offered, and in the following weeks fliers with Jacob's photo and description were mailed out nationwide. Tens of thousands of tips poured in.

In 2004, authorities ruled out a suspicious car they had been seeking for more than 14 years, and instead began focusing on the possibility that Jacob was taken by someone on foot. The revelation, Sanner said at the time, led investigators to rethink their "theories of who's involved."

On June 30 of this year, authorities converged

on the Rassier farm with search warrants. A day later, they began digging. The property had been searched before, but not so thoroughly. Sanner wouldn't say exactly what led to the recent search.

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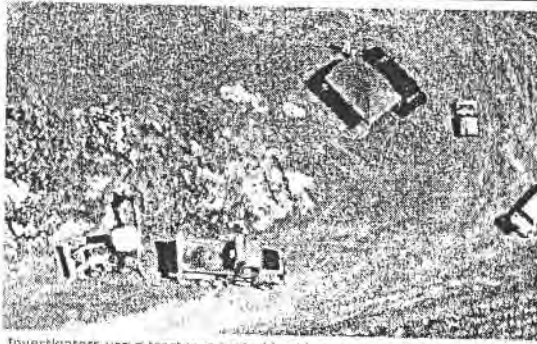
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Investigators use a tractor-mounted backhoe to dig just southeast of the Rassier farm in St. Joseph, Minn., Thursday, June 1, 2010. Crews have been digging up a portion of the yard at a rural St. Joseph farm near the site where Jacob Wetterling was abducted in 1989. (AP Photo/St. Cloud Times)

Sanner said Daniel Rassier was home alone on the night of the abduction, and authorities have talked to him over the years under many circumstances.

"I had nothing to do with it," Rassier said in a recent e-mail to the AP. When asked if he had obtained a lawyer, he said no. "I have nothing to hide and still trust law enforcement may come around."

Rassier is an elementary school music and band teacher and has worked full time for the Rocori school district since 1978, said Superintendent Scott Staska. There are no disciplinary actions or complaints in his file.

But this year, when Rassier began teaching vocal music at St. Boniface School, the principal there put a paraprofessional in the classroom with him, citing concern from parents.

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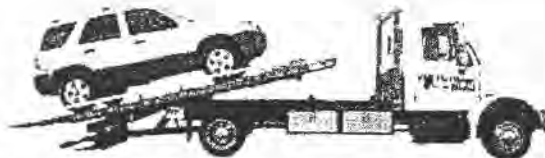
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Sep 28 2010 11:20 pm CST Central

## Wetterling Family Still Waiting For Answers

ST. JOSEPH, Minn. (WCCO) — Nearly three months after the most well-known kidnapping case in the state was back under the microscope, investigators have released the preliminary findings of their two-day search at a farm in St. Joseph, Minn. However, officials say the test results do not lead to a break in the Jacob Wetterling case.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner made the announcement Tuesday, saying the investigation continues. He says testing was unable to "establish, distinguish or identify potential evidence."

Sanner also said "this does not exclude the possibility of further testing at a later date as ongoing research provides opportunities that are unavailable today."

He noted that because the investigation is ongoing, certain details will remain confidential.

The Stearns County Sheriff spent months analyzing the truckloads of ashes that authorities, including the DCA, seized from the property in July where Wetterling was abducted in 1989.

A backhoe produced six loads of dirt and ash that was hauled away for forensic analysis on July 1 and 2. State officials say those items from the site yield no break in the case.

Back in 1989, a police dog picked up Wetterling's scent just inside the property and sources say it disappeared a couple hundred feet away. Sources also say a mold was made of his footprint on the site back then.

Jacob was 11 when he was taken by a masked gunman on Oct. 22, 1989, from a rural road in St. Joseph. He hasn't been seen since and no one has been arrested.

Outside his chiropractor's office in St. Joseph, Jacob's dad, Jerry, said he felt "empty" with the latest news, which the sheriff shared with the Wetterling family last night before it was made public on Tuesday.

"It is kind of like the lead itself is saying non-conclusive so it is like it really doesn't have a total conclusion to it so it is hard to know what exactly to make of it all," Jerry Wetterling said.

He said he is also grateful for the amount of time investigators worked on this latest lead.

"It is always fabulous to see when something does come up how it gets looked at and pursued and taken to conclusion and that's really exciting," he said. "People really want to know what happened here, finding Jacob."

While he waits for answers, Jerry always wear a button with his son's photo on it.

"I wear it every day. My other three kids, I can call them on the phone, say, 'Hi, how is it going?' But this is my way of just connecting with Jacob," he said.

The Stearns County Sheriff will not say what items were actually tested by the BCA crime lab but he did say more analysis is planned for some of the items.



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Jacob's father, Jerry Wetterling, always wears a button with his son's photo on it.  
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## Search for Jacob finds only pain

Three months after investigators hunted again for evidence in the 1989 disappearance, officials said they found no new leads.

By RICHARD MERYHEW and ABBY SIMONS, Star Tribune

Last update: September 29, 2010 - 9:31 AM

ST. JOSEPH, MINN. - Twenty-one years. And still no answer to the urgent question: What happened to Jacob?

In the three months since investigators returned to a farm near the spot where 11-year-old Jacob Wetterling disappeared to unearth dirt and ash, people across the state have wondered whether police would finally find evidence to crack a case that has haunted a community since that warm October night in 1989.

On Tuesday, a dejected sheriff said nope, not yet.

"When you initially get news like this, it feels like a setback," Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said.

Sanner said the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension notified his office late Monday that forensic tests on items unearthed at the farm site this summer turned up no evidence that would lead to an arrest or solve the case.

He said testing on some items will continue, but because the investigation is ongoing, the items tested and the type of testing will remain confidential.

He added, however, that investigators from Stearns County, the BCA and FBI remain committed to solving the case, which has transfixed a region for more than two decades.

"Is it a disappointment? Somewhat," Sanner said. "But for me, it's more of a motivator. I can get knocked down many times, but I'm going to keep getting back up again. And that's where we're at right now."

"If the individual responsible for this crime thinks they can breathe easier, that's a huge mistake."

Jacob's father, Jerry Wetterling, who still wears a button with a photograph of his son's face, said he learned there was no news when his wife, Patty, called him Monday night after talking with investigators.

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"I think it's a case of another day of not knowing," a weary Wetterling said Tuesday from his chiropractic office in St. Joseph.

"If this were conclusive and we found Jacob, I'm not even sure how I would feel about that. I'm still hopeful Jacob is going to be found breathing. But whatever it is, it is. And I'm prepared for that."

Investigators had searched the farm property, which is the closest residence to the kidnapping scene, at least twice before. On several occasions, they also interviewed a middle-age man who lives there with his parents and who has long been considered a person of interest in the case.

The man, now 54, was questioned by investigators in 1989, but several authorities close to the case have said over the years that his answers always left them "uncomfortable."

In 2004, investigators obtained DNA samples from him. He also agreed to be hypnotized and take a lie detector test.

That same year, authorities sent him a handwritten letter from Patty Wetterling in which she pleaded with whoever had taken Jacob to confess what happened and turn himself

over to police.

On Tuesday, those pleas remained unanswered. "For us, life is no different. We didn't know anything yesterday. We don't know anything today. But we can't hold our lives hostage to this person or any person," Patty Wetterling said. "This guy warrants no more of my energy. If he did it, they'll find out. If he didn't, they'll find out. And they'll keep going."


The man has said he had nothing to do with it.

"It's a bit of a relief, even though it doesn't answer too many questions," he told the AP on Tuesday. "But it does answer the idea that Jacob could be alive and well somewhere out there. ... There's the hope, we all have the hope that he is out there."

The man said among the items taken in the search was a box of newspaper clippings about Jacob's abduction and excerpts of his journal with his thoughts about the case.

"I would not expect to get those back for a while," he said. The Star Tribune is not naming him because he has not been charged.

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## 'A letdown'

Many in this community of 6,100 residents 75 miles northwest of the Twin Cities seemed discouraged by Tuesday's news.

For two decades they've waited and hoped, figuring that sooner or later, the cops would catch the break or the piece of luck that would crack the mystery.

That it didn't happen this time was "a letdown," said Marilyn Ruhr, who has lived in St. Joseph for 24 years. "You hope that someday the family is going to have some closure. You think that finally it's going to be solved."

Said longtime resident Paul Ritzenthaler: "Everyone has a preconceived notion of what happened, how it happened. Everybody has their suspicions. And again, it's a small town. Everyone seems to have a theory, but nobody has a solid answer."

The search of the farm property this summer is just one of nearly 50,000 leads investigators have pursued since Jacob was abducted the night of Oct. 22, 1989, as he and his brother Trevor, 10, and best friend, Aaron Larson, 11, biked home from a convenience store in rural St. Joseph.

Jacob has not been seen since, and no one has ever been arrested in the case.

Sanner wouldn't say this summer what prompted investigators to return and search the farm again. He also declined to elaborate Tuesday.

"I really can't talk about it," he said.

Several authorities familiar with the investigation, however, said in June that investigators returned to the farm site with cadaver dogs, tractors and trucks after two young agents looking at the case file suggested going back and taking a fresh look at several spots on the property, including a remote location where the family either burned materials or dumped ashes.

One official described the work as a "hunch," but added that it was no more than that. Another framed it as "a shot in the dark."

## Needs to be solved

About a half dozen truckloads of dirt were taken from the farm site and sifted for possible evidence. In late July, Stearns County authorities said "some items of interest" had been found, but they did not elaborate.

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The hope was that recent advances in DNA technology that now make it possible for investigators to pull DNA potential from bone fragments, teeth, hair or even fingernails would lead to a break.

But Sanner said Tuesday that the forensic testing was "unable to establish, distinguish or identify potential evidence."

In St. Joseph, there was disappointment.

"Until it is solved, people will always wonder who did it," Ruhr said.

"Where he is," added her friend, Marcia Teigen.

"And what happened," Ruhr said.

"And why it happened the way it did," Teigen said.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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## No clues to Wetterling case found in items removed from site

By Kari Petrie and David Unze •  
kpetrie@stcloudtimes.com, dunze@stcloudtimes.com • September 29, 2010

Jerry Wetterling had a gut feeling about what investigators would learn from the truckloads of dirt taken from a farm near where his son Jacob was last seen.

How he wishes his gut was wrong.

"I don't know what I feel. It's not — I don't feel happy," he said Tuesday, the day Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner announced nothing of consequence had yet been found in the midsummer farm search. "It's not happy/positive, but it's pretty much what I thought, that nothing conclusive would be found. I want answers. The best answer would be that Jacob's alive on some island and he's well."

It's been three months since investigators converged on a St. Joseph Township farm and took six truckloads of dirt and several other items. The finds were tested by the Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and preliminary results were "unable to establish, distinguish or identify potential evidence," Sanner said Tuesday in a news release.

But investigators remain focused on finding out what happened to Jacob and resolving the 21-year-old case.

Eleven-year-old Jacob Wetterling was abducted Oct. 22, 1989, when a masked gunman stopped him, his brother and a friend as they returned home from a store. Wetterling's brother and friend were let go, but the man took Jacob.

"This is just another step in a long, ongoing investigation," Sanner told the Times on Tuesday.

Still searching

Some items found in the search will undergo further testing, but Sanner would not say what those items are or what sort of testing will be done.

"I'm grateful for the depth of the investigation and for everyone who has put a tremendous amount of

energy into finding what was there," Patty Wetterling said of the search of the farm. "But today's like any other day; we still don't have any answers."

She said she hadn't been told much about what items were taken from the farm or what the tests of those items revealed.

"I know nothing more than you guys do," she told the Times.

The search of the farm and the renewed attention to the disappearance of her son have taken a toll on her, she admitted. And she's decided that she can't focus her energy on the person who took her son.


"I honestly can tell you that I've spent very little energy thinking about the guy who took Jacob. Because it's all negative energy, and it's not worth the time," she said. "I can't go there. This has been a long summer, and he's not worth any bit of my time."

The ups and downs of the investigation make it difficult to know how to respond to some of the information investigators reveal publicly, Jerry Wetterling said. When asked if not having the answers is the worst part of the ongoing search for his son, Jerry paused.

"I just don't know what is the worst," he said. "There's no good in this. For 21 years he's been gone. That's no good. The fact that he was taken in the first place is the worst."

High priority

The advertisement features the Dish Network logo in the top left corner. The main text reads "Add NFL RedZone to your DISH Network Package for \$7.99/MONTH". Below this, the NFL logo is shown next to the "RedZone" branding. At the bottom, it states "ONLY AVAILABLE WITH QUALIFYING PROGRAMMING PACKAGES". The background is dark with a subtle pattern.

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The case remains high priority for the sheriff's office. For more than two decades, investigators have probed thousands of tips and interviewed thousands of people.

"We've fallen off the horse many times before and have gotten back up," Sanner said. "This isn't any different."

Sanner hopes technology will continue to improve and allow for future testing of the items seized.

Because the investigation is ongoing, Sanner said he cannot go into more detail about the items and search. Sanner would not comment on reports by other media outlets about specific items taken during the search June 30 and July 1 at a farm at 29748-91st Ave. in St. Joseph Township.

The abduction happened near the end of the farm's driveway. The property is owned by Robert and Rita Rassier. Their son Dan Rassier, 54, lives with them and did at the time of the abduction.

After the search of the property, Sanner called Dan Rassier a person of interest in the abduction.

Dan Rassier said investigators took ash from a burn pit in the backyard, which could have included animal remains. They also took items from a storage shed, including a clothing chest, a lawn chair and the bottom of an umbrella stand. From inside the house, Rassier said officers took a box of his personal items that included personal notes, pictures and news clippings relating to Wetterling's abduction.

BCA spokeswoman Jill Oliveira confirmed that some testing is still under way on several items. But she could not say what those items are or what type of testing is being done. She also could not provide details on how long testing will take.

Investigators spent a week sifting through the soil and sent what they found to the BCA labs.

Despite the setback of not finding any new evidence in the searches over the summer, Sanner said he remains motivated to solve the case.

"If I was the suspect, I wouldn't take this as a signal to relax," Sanner said.

Person of interest

Dan Rassier is an elementary school music and band teacher and has worked full-time for the Rocori school district since 1978. Superintendent Scott Staska said there are no disciplinary actions or complaints in his file.

But this year, when Rassier began teaching vocal music at St. Boniface School, the principal there put a paraprofessional in the classroom with him, citing concern from parents.

Rassier has been interviewed by investigators several times about the disappearance and has said he submitted to DNA sampling and other tests.

Rassier has told the Times he is innocent.

When asked Tuesday if Rassier is still considered a person of interest, Sanner said, "this doesn't change anything."

"I know they haven't quit on the person of interest," Patty Wetterling said. "I know that he's still a person of interest."

Rassier said Tuesday that he wishes he could have been cleared of any wrongdoing.

"I hope that we can come to some agreement that a mistake has been made," he said.

But he said the good thing is Tuesday's news means Jacob could still be found alive.

"I still have hope that he could be out there," Rassier said.

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The Wetterlings continue to wait for answers.

"Yeah, it would have been great to have some clarity of answers," Jerry Wetterling said. "That doesn't mean I'm not hopeful or that I've given up hope for finding Jacob."

And in the meantime?


"You do what you can to build a better world for kids in the meantime," Patty said. "That's what we do."




**Mom Dilemma #36:**  
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**YES, she has to go like that!**

**NO, I have some rules!**

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#### Timeline of the investigation

Oct. 22, 1989: Eleven-year-old Jacob Erwin Wetterling is abducted by a masked gunman about 9:15 p.m. along 91st Avenue, southeast of St. Joseph. Firefighters and 35 officers from the Stearns County Sheriff's Office and other law enforcement agencies search the area. Two local FBI agents and five from Minneapolis are assigned to the case. A state helicopter with a searchlight searches the nearby woods and fields. A command post is set up at Del-Win Ballroom in St. Joseph. Searches are called off at 3 a.m. until daybreak.

Oct. 23, 1989: The search resumes at 8 a.m. Department of Natural Resources officers use all-terrain vehicles to search a two-mile radius around the abduction site. Helicopters fly over a 25-square-mile area. A Minneapolis bloodhound leads officers to tire tracks, prompting officers to believe the kidnapper had a car nearby. By 1:30 p.m., fliers are distributed.



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☐ YES, it's beautiful and special!

☐ NO, I have some rules!

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Oct. 24, 1989: An FBI expert in psychological profiles flies in from Washington, D.C., to join about 14 other investigators.

Oct. 25, 1989: Authorities receive tips that a small red car had been seen in St. Joseph in the past three weeks. About two dozen red cars in the area are investigated. The FBI profile describes the abductor as a white man, 25-35 years old, employed in a low-skilled job with a low self-image probably stemming from a physical deformity such as acne or scars. About 600 people gather in St. Joseph Catholic Church to pray.

Oct. 26, 1989: At 11:30 a.m. about 30 horses and riders begin searching one mile east of St. Joseph. About 50 officers, including at least 20 FBI agents, sift through hundreds of tips. A group of anonymous Twin Cities business leaders offers a \$100,000 reward for Jacob's safe return within 72 hours.

Oct. 27, 1989: Officials release an artist's sketch of a man who had tried to abduct a Stearns County boy earlier that summer, believing the two incidents could have involved the same man.

Oct. 28, 1989: A white sweat sock is found about 100 yards from the abduction site, but a bloodhound can't track its scent farther than a nearby road. Tri-County Crime Stoppers adds to the reward money, bringing the total to \$125,000.

Oct. 29, 1989: From 7:30-10 p.m., roadblocks are set up in St. Joseph. About 2,000 motorists are stopped and questioned by the State Patrol. At 11 p.m. the \$100,000 reward established by Twin Cities businesses expires.

Nov. 3, 1989: Authorities have questioned 100 potential suspects. They conduct a final ground search.

Nov. 4, 1989: About 5,000 people link hands, forming a chain from St. Joseph to St. Cloud in what is dubbed "Hands for Jacob." A sketch of a 1970s Ford van is released. The van was believed to have been used in an earlier abduction attempt of a 10-year-old boy. The sketch generates several tips.

Nov. 9, 1989: An unauthorized sketch of a former suspect circulates. The sketch was removed from circulation in a few days. Authorities have received more than 12,000 tips.

Nov. 12, 1989: Two more suspect sketches are released, one of a man who talked about the incident and another of a man suspected of trying to kidnap a New Brighton boy. They generate more than 300 tips.

Nov. 17, 1989: A detailed description of a car involved in the attempted abduction of a 13-year-old boy in Roberts, Wis., is released. Someone calls a national missing children's network and reports that Jacob is in St. Joseph. Authorities investigate but nothing turns up.

Nov. 23, 1989: The FBI releases another sketch, one that blends three others because agents believe all three sightings could have been the same man.

Nov. 24, 1989: Authorities seek information on three cars seen in Jacob's neighborhood before the

abduction.

Nov. 30, 1989: A more accurate drawing of an earlier sketch is released.

Dec. 14, 1989: Attention turns to links between Jacob's abduction and the abduction and sexual assault of a 12-year-old Cold Spring boy in January. A sketch of the suspect is released. Details lead investigators to think the two could be related.

Jan. 16, 1990: The Wetterlings announce plans to establish the Jacob Wetterling Foundation.

May 2, 1991: Patty Wetterling sends 10,000 copies of a letter asking for help in finding her son. It generates a few leads, but nothing significant.

May 24, 1991: U.S. Sen. Dave Durenberger proposes a national registry of people who have committed crimes against children. The measure would be known as the Jacob Wetterling Act. It mirrors a Minnesota proposal.

October 2003: The driver of a long-sought vehicle comes forward. Authorities rule him out as a suspect in the abduction. The theory of the case changes, leading investigators to focus on local suspects who could've been on foot when snatching Jacob.

February 2004: The new information brings energy back to the case. Media report the change in focus for the case. Authorities interview a local potential suspect.

May 2004: Media reports surface that link Jacob's abduction to the abduction and sexual assault of the 12-year-old Cold Spring boy. The boy was taken 10 months before Jacob. The victim comes forward and says he believes links exist. Authorities receive about 20 new tips. But investigators believe the cases likely aren't related.

June 30: Law enforcement converge on a rural St. Joseph Township farm. Officers from Stearns County, Minnesota Bureau of Criminal Apprehension and FBI search the site. Jacob was last seen at the end of the property's driveway.

July 1: Crews dig up the ground at the farm at

### Mom Dilemma #36:

Your daughter insists on wearing her princess costume to the grocery store. Allow it or not?



YES, I'll let her wear it!  
NO, I have some rules!  
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29748-91st Ave. St. Joseph Township. They remain quiet on what they are doing at the site.

July 2: Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner said investigators released "a number of items" during a search of the St. Joseph Township property. It could take months for the items to be analyzed. Sanner calls Dan Rassier, a man who lives at the property, a person of interest in Jacob's disappearance.

Sept. 28: Sanner's office reports that lab tests on materials gathered in June and July do not produce evidence in the case.

11

File downloads

\* MAP: Abduction site (.pdf)



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The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead

Published August 03, 2012, 07:42 AM

## Man says rights violated in Jacob Wetterling abduction case

MINNEAPOLIS — A man who has been publicly identified as a person of interest in a Minnesota boy's 1989 abduction told The Associated Press on Thursday that he sent a letter to 14 state officials and agencies, complaining about how he has been treated by law enforcement.

By Amy Forliti, Associated Press. INFORUM

MINNEAPOLIS — A man who has been publicly identified as a person of interest in a Minnesota boy's 1989 abduction told The Associated Press on Thursday that he sent a letter to 14 state officials and agencies, complaining about how he has been treated by law enforcement.

In the letter obtained by the AP, Dan Rassier wrote that law officers violated his civil rights and his family's rights and "abused the privileges of their power" in relation to the Jacob Wetterling case. Rassier also criticized the way the investigation has been handled over the years.

This is the first time Rassier, an elementary school music teacher, has put his complaints in writing. When asked why he did so after all this time, he said: "They are just going to keep me kind of on this lifeline dangling there forever, and I want that to stop."

Jacob was 11 when he was abducted Oct. 22, 1989, by a masked gunman at the end of Rassier's driveway in St. Joseph, about 80 miles northwest of Minneapolis. He hasn't been seen since. Authorities have examined tens of thousands of leads, but there have been no arrests in the case that drew national attention and led to changes in sex offender registration laws.

Rassier, now 56, was home alone at the time. He has been questioned multiple times, but his name didn't come out publicly until 2010, when authorities searched his family farm over two days. Forensic tests on items taken from that search have yielded no evidence linking them to the crime, but investigators are still testing some items, or waiting for technology to advance so additional testing can be done.

Rassier, who says he is innocent, has not been cleared.

"Is it considered legal for law enforcement to give the public the perception I am guilty of something when I'm not?" Rassier wrote, adding: "To destroy our family's name the way they did because they had a 'Hunch!' is in itself, a serious crime. Nothing can make it right now. The damage has been done. But to leave the whole thing open to speculation and open to the public's imagination is just wrong!"

In his letter, Rassier also complained that authorities have not returned his property or listened to details he is offering about what he witnessed the night Jacob was taken.

Stearns County Sheriff John Sanner is among a handful of people named in the letter. He said Thursday he hadn't seen it, but couldn't comment regardless because the investigation into the boy's abduction is still active.

Sanner said authorities have put a tremendous amount of resources into solving the case, and added: "I won't be happy until we resolve the case. I'm not satisfied until that happens."

Authorities have not elaborated on what prompted them to search Rassier's family farm two years ago, saying only that they had probable cause.

Rassier said he mailed the letter on Wednesday to 14 different agencies or state officials, including the Department of Public Safety, the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training, the Board on Judicial Standards, as well as the Stearns County administrator and Sens. Amy Klobuchar and Al Franken, Rep. Michele Bachmann, and Gov. Mark Dayton.

The AP reached out to all 14 people to whom Rassier sent the letter. As of Thursday, no one confirmed that the letter had been received.

Rassier said if nothing else comes of the complaints he's lodging, at least he spoke out about what he perceived to be problems with the investigation.

"Like any unsolved crime, Jacob Wetterling and his family along with the public deserve nothing less than the truth," he wrote.

Jacob's mother, Patty Wetterling, when reached by the AP on Thursday, said the family was out of town and hadn't seen Rassier's letter. She declined comment.

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Tags: news, updates, minnesota

M/29

## **KSTP-TV REWARD PLEDGE: JACOB WETTERLING**

### **Summary; Reward Pledge**

KSTP-TV, LLC pledges to pay a reward in a total, gross amount up to Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for new, truthful, non-public information given to investigator Allen Garber or Steve Gilkerson which results in: (1) the arrest and prosecution of one or more persons in connection with the October 22, 1989, kidnapping and abduction of Jacob Wetterling; (2) the proven live appearance of Jacob Wetterling; or (3) the discovery and proven identification of Jacob Wetterling's mortal remains.

### **Eligibility**

1. In order to be eligible to receive a reward payment, an informant must provide new, truthful, non-public information to investigator Allen Garber or Steve Gilkerson, which leads to one of the three qualifying conditions set forth in the immediately next paragraph.
2. The payment of a reward is conditioned upon the occurrence of one of the following three events:
  - a. The arrest and prosecution of one or more persons in connection with the October 22, 1989, kidnapping and abduction of Jacob Wetterling;
  - b. The proven live appearance of Jacob Wetterling; or
    - i. KSTP-TV shall accept as conclusive either Stearns County (MN)'s formal determination in this regard, so long as it is based upon sound and recognized DNA testing procedures, or, if county officials are not engaged in this process, KSTP-TV may rely on its own private DNA testing.
  - c. The discovery and proven identification of Jacob Wetterling's mortal remains.
    - i. KSTP-TV shall accept as conclusive the Stearns County (MN) medical examiner's formal, filed finding in this regard.
3. The following persons are ineligible to accept an offer of reward:
  - a. Any employee or agent of Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc. or any of its affiliated companies;
  - b. Any person who has himself or herself engaged in any unlawful conduct in connection with the Jacob Wetterling matter or any investigation into the Jacob Wetterling matter;
  - c. Any person under the age of eighteen (18) years of age at the time that the reward is awarded;
  - d. Any person whose ordinary, compensated duties include the investigation of criminal cases;

- e. Any person who provides false information, regardless of where it may lead;
- f. Any member of Jacob Wetterling's immediate, nuclear family;
- g. Any member of Allen Garber's extended family; or
- h. Any member Steve Gilkerson's extended family.

#### **Awarding and Allocation of Reward**

1. The reward payment(s) offered by this pledge is/are capped at a grand total of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000), regardless of how many qualifying informants there may be.
2. Whether a reward payment is properly payable under the terms of this Reward Pledge shall be determined by KSTP-TV in consultation with federal and state law enforcement familiar with the case, and the prosecuting attorney(s) (if the prosecuting attorney(s) is/are able and willing to participate in the determination).
3. The amount of any reward to be paid shall be determined in the sole discretion of KSTP-TV in consultation with federal and state law enforcement familiar with the case, and the prosecuting attorney(s) (if the prosecuting attorney(s) is/are able and willing to participate in the determination).
4. In the event more than one person is determined to be entitled to receive a reward payment, the allocation of any reward amount shall be determined by KSTP-TV in consultation with federal and state law enforcement familiar with the case, and the prosecuting attorney(s) (if the prosecuting attorney(s) is/are able and willing to participate in the determination).
  - a. If more than one person independently provides substantially similar qualifying information, the reward shall be payable to the person first providing such information, unless federal and state law enforcement familiar with the case, and the prosecuting attorney(s) (if the prosecuting attorney(s) is/are able and willing to participate in the determination) recommend otherwise.
5. Should any conflicting claims arise, or if one or more of the claimants does not accept KSTP-TV's determination as to the reward recipient(s), or the amount and/or allocation of the reward, KSTP-TV may bring an action in the nature of an interpleader, to determine which claimant, if any, is entitled to reward money, and, if so, in what amount. KSTP-TV shall be entitled to receive its attorneys' fees and costs in connection with any such action, which shall be assessed against the reward money remaining with KSTP-TV or on deposit with the registry of the court, and may thereafter be assessed against the party or parties found to have the less meritorious claim to the reward.

#### **Confidentiality**

This Reward Pledge may be disclosed to appropriate federal and state law enforcement, as well as to potential witnesses who may have an interest in providing information in order to possibly become eligible for a reward payment. In order to maximize the effectiveness of this pledge and ensure the integrity of the investigative process, KSTP-TV will take steps to ensure, but cannot guarantee, the confidentiality of the Reward Pledge's existence. In furtherance thereof, the

station states that it does not intend to publicly announce the existence of this pledge until such time as law enforcement consents to its doing so.

**Award Announcement; Breaking News, First Interview and Extended Coverage Rights; Exclusivity**

In response to requests from Ms. Wetterling, and Messrs. Garber and Gilkerson, KSTP-TV has committed to pay Mr. Garber's and Mr. Gilkerson's reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in connection with their traveling to California in furtherance of their investigative activities. In recognition of KSTP-TV's commitment in this regard, combined with its reward pledge, both of which are offered in a sincere effort to facilitate the investigation and possible solving of this crime, and taking into account the public nature of any of the three qualifying conditions being satisfied, and that the announcement thereof will likely be made by law enforcement and thus out of the control of Patty Wetterling, Jerry Wetterling, Allen Garber and/or Steve Gilkerson - Dr. and Ms. Wetterling, Mr. Garber and Mr. Gilkerson each agrees to grant KSTP-TV breaking-news, first-interview and first-access rights as follows:

1. Breaking News: To the extent reasonably feasible, Dr. and Ms. Wetterling, and Messrs. Garber and Gilkerson agree to provide KSTP-TV exclusive first rights of any announcement that may be made concerning any "break" in the case, or any announcement concerning any of the three qualifying conditions having occurred.
  - a. In connection therewith, each agrees to give KSTP-TV as much advance notification as reasonably possible in order to provide KSTP-TV an opportunity to "break" the story, to the extent feasible.
  - b. In addition, each agrees to keep KSTP-TV reasonably apprised of developments in the case, including advance notice of information being presented to law enforcement for prosecutorial review.
2. First Interview: Following any announcement or breaking news concerning any break in the case or any announcement concerning any of the three qualifying conditions having occurred, each agrees that KSTP-TV shall have "first interview" rights, which it may utilize on an exclusive basis, for a period of no less than twelve (12) hours.
  - a. Similar "first interview" rights shall continue and apply to all phases of any judicial and prosecutorial proceedings, including appeals.
3. Extended Coverage: Given the high profile nature of this crime, and its importance to the community, KSTP-TV would anticipate doing "extended coverage" concerning its history and resolution. Because of the long-term nature of the investigative process, the preparation of the report may take considerable time, and because of the story's significance, the station may hold the story until a rating book month (February, May, July or November) in order to ensure that this significant report reaches a larger audience than usual. Dr. and Ms. Wetterling, and Messrs. Garber and Gilkerson agree to provide KSTP-TV exclusive rights in connection with any such extended coverage which KSTP-TV may decide to prepare concerning the case and its investigation and resolution, which may be ongoing through the conclusion of any resulting criminal proceedings. Each further agrees to provide KSTP-TV exclusive access for extended coverage through such time as the station has aired in full any extended coverage it may elect to produce and air.
4. In all cases, KSTP-TV may use its reporting contemplated herein on any and all of its "sister," affiliated and related stations and entities.



**Term; Sunset**

KSTP-TV's Reward Pledge will apply to qualifying information that is provided to investigators Allen Garber or Steve Gilkerson prior to 11:59 p.m., December 31, 2014.

**Miscellaneous**

The recipient of any reward paid pursuant to this pledge will be responsible for paying income taxes on the reward. As a result, any recipient must, as a condition of receiving a reward, provide KSTP-TV his or her legal name, address, and social security number. A 1099 will be issued by KSTP-TV to all applicable taxing authorities.

Any person seeking to claim a reward under this pledge knowingly and voluntarily assumes all risks attendant thereto, acknowledges that there may be dangers involved in participating in the Wetterling investigation, and agrees and acknowledges that KSTP-TV has no responsibility or liability for any injury or harm that may be suffered as a result of any individual's decision to seek out or provide information that may qualify one to seek a reward payment hereunder.

Informants wishing to confirm the veracity of KSTP-TV's Reward Pledge may confidentially contact James A. Barnum, vice president and deputy general counsel, KSTP-TV, LLC, 3415 University Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55114, Tel. (651) 642-4335, email [jbarnum@hbi.com](mailto:jbarnum@hbi.com).

Shane - Review This and give  
me a call so we can  
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Steve G.

10 PM  
Nov. 17, 2015

Knicker length trench coat  
Marlene Gwost  
320-352-2059

A Sauk Centre couple is speaking out for the first time in 26 years about what they saw three hours before Jacob Wetterling disappeared.

Kevin and Marlene Gwost are members of one of Minnesota's best known polka bands, the Nite Owls. They were among the headliners at a polka festival attended by at least 500 people on the night of the abduction in St. Joseph. It took place at a ballroom half a mile from the abduction scene.

The Nite Owls finished their set at the Del Win about 5 p.m. Other bands would play until 10 p.m. There were at least five hundred fans there.

"They always drew a large crowd," Marlene said.

The Gwosts left the ballroom around 5:30 p.m. and stopped at the Tom Thumb gas station, which was about two blocks away. They were rushing to get to another gig. Kevin pumped gas, Marlene went in for sandwiches.

She noticed a suspicious man inside immediately, and so did her husband.

"I said to my husband, 'I just have a real funny feeling about that guy why was he standing there not shopping just looking,'" Marlene said. "He wasn't looking at anything in the aisles at all. All he was doing was looking over the top of the aisles that were there. And I just had a gut feeling that there was something going on."

Marlene worked at the time in the investigations unit of Stearns County Child Protection Services. The Gwosts reported the man to the sheriff's office the day after the abduction, and Marlene was asked by investigators to help put together one of the early sketches of the suspect.

Both Gwosts say while the sketch they helped create and other sketches of suspicious individuals from that night show a bald man. The man they saw was wearing a baseball cap similar to the one in a later sketch.

Marlene says the man was 5 feet 5 inches tall to 5 feet 7 seven inches tall. He had broad shoulders and was wearing a full-length brown coat that did not have a collar.

"I remember mentioning to Marlene that there's something weird with that guy," Kevin said. "The look on his face, an intense gaze, but at the same time he also had an uneasy, unsettled, maybe nervous demeanor at the same time."

A Nov. 6, 1989 article from the St. Cloud Times says a man with the same description was inside the same Tom Thumb three hours later. That is when Jacob Wetterling, his brother Trevor and their friend, Aaron Larson, arrived to the store on bikes. It was while biking back to the Wetterling home in the darkness that a masked, armed man stopped them and took Jacob.

The day of Heinrich's arrest, Marlene saw his mugshot on TV.

"I was standing right here and the hair stood up on my arm," Marlene said.

We showed them the most widely-circulated sketch of the suspect with the baseball cap, as well as a 1990 mugshot of Heinrich.

"Definitely the eyes, the eye brows," Kevin said.

He says only the unusual angle of the mug shot, with Heinrich's head titled up, keeps him from identifying 100 percent that Heinrich was the man he saw.

Marlene has no doubt.

"You take that one now of him the way he is right now and you lay that next to here, that's what gave my goose bumps," she said. "I just feel it's him. I really do feel that that's the guy."

Heinrich is 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighs 190 pounds. A former employee of an area radio station told WCCO that Stearns County Sheriff's Office has a video of the polka fest that includes shots of the crowd.